

**ANALYSIS 7**  
RATIONALISING THE  
NATION'S DIRECT TAXES

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NIRMALA ASKS BANKS TO BE MORE  
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VIJAYAWADA, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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**BHEEMLA NAYAK**  
PRE-RELEASE  
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# Mekapati Goutham Reddy dies of cardiac arrest @ 50

1971  
to  
2022

Mekapati Goutham Reddy was first elected to AP Assembly in 2014 from Atmakuru constituency in his native SPS Nellore district.

**CPR, advanced life support at Apollo failed to revive AP's IT & Industries Minister**



## CM rushes to Hyd, pays homage

Association between the families of Mekapati Rajamohan Reddy and YS Rajasekhara Reddy goes a long way. Their sons Mekapati Goutham Reddy and YS Jaganmohan Reddy have been known to each other since their youth days. After Jaganmohan Reddy quit Congress and floated YSRCP, Goutham Reddy's father Rajamohan Reddy was one among those few who sailed with him. Both Goutham and Rajamohan Reddy have been a pillar of support to Jagan in his political moves. So close is Goutham Reddy to Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy that the latter was shocked when he initially learnt about the death.

**SNV SUDHIR**  
VIJAYAWADA

State IT and Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, who is a known fitness enthusiast, died due to cardiac arrest in Hyderabad on Monday morning. He was 50 and is survived by wife Srikirithi Reddy, daughter Sai Ananya Reddy and son Krishna Arjun Reddy. Despite 90 minutes of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and receiving advanced cardiac life support at the hospital where he was rushed to after he complained of chest pain and collapsed, Goutham Reddy could not be revived and declared dead. His father Mekapati Rajamohan Reddy was an MP from Nellore and to continue his father's polit-

**He was unresponsive, not breathing and in cardiac arrest on arrival. He received immediate CPR and advanced cardiac life support in our emergency department. CPR was done for more than 90 minutes. Despite our best efforts he could not be revived," the hospital statement said**

ical legacy Goutham Reddy joined politics and was elected from Ahmakur Assembly segment in Nellore district twice in 2014 and 2019.



## An avid fitness enthusiast

IT & Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, who died of cardiac arrest on Monday morning, is known for his macho personality and regularity with his workouts at the gym. He is always known for his fitness and never complained about any health issues. Last year in April, he had tested positive for Covid-19 with mild symptoms but had recovered at home. Since then, he had been active with his routine at home, gym, constituency and other ministry-related engagements.

## Guv expresses shock & sadness

**PNS** VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan expressed profound shock and sadness over the sudden demise of Mekapati Goutham Reddy, Minister for Industries, Commerce and Information Technology, due to a heart attack in Hyderabad on Monday. Governor Harichandan said it was very sad to know of the demise of Goutham Reddy, who was a young and dynamic minister with a promising political career ahead of him, at such an early age. The Governor said, "I pray for rest to the soul of Mekapati Goutham Reddy and offer my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members."



### Words fail to describe loss: CM

**PNS** VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed deep shock and profound grief over the untimely demise of Sri Mekapati Goutham Reddy, the State Industries and IT Minister. Terming Goutham Reddy a young promising leader who was known to him since early days, the Chief Minister expressed anguish over the tragic incident and said that words fail to describe the loss of his young Cabinet colleague. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members with a heavy heart.



## Goutham played a stellar role in wooing investments to AP at Dubai Expo 2020

**PNS** VIJAYAWADA

Last week, IT & Industries Minister Goutham Reddy was busy with the investment roadshow by launching the exclusive Andhra Pradesh pavilion at the ongoing Dubai Expo in UAE. While the state pavilion has seen a footfall of over 7,000-10,000 visitors per day, the State delegation led by Goutham Reddy has undertaken multiple investment roadshows with the businesses based in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and local diaspora, where the minister addressed over 400+ business



professionals from various industries and highlighted the immense opportunities for investments and collaborations in sectors such as Agriculture & Food Sector, Infrastructure (Ports, Airports, Logistics, Industrial Parks, Construction,

Renewable Energy), Manufacturing (Pharmaceuticals, Food Processing, Petrochemicals, IT & Electronics, Textiles, Electric Mobility) and Exports. Over the course of four days from Feb 14 to 17, the delegation interacted with over 100+ businesses based, as part of the CXO G2B meetings and three business roundtables with industry bodies based out of Dubai and Abu Dhabi such as the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) Dubai.

### Timeline of tragic end

- 6 am:** Goutham Reddy wakes up
- 6:30 am:** Spends time talking over the phone
- 7 am:** Sits on the couch on the second floor of his residence in Jubilee Hills
- 07:12 am:** Goutham asks the cook to call personal driver Nageswara Rao
- 7:15 am:** Sudden cardiac arrest & slips from sofa
- 7:16 am:** Goutham's wife Srikirithi shouts
- 7:18 am:** Driver Nageswara Rao tries fist-aid
- 7:20 am:** Goutham asks for water but unable to drink
- 7:22am:** Minister complains of chest pain to wife Sri Kirithi
- 7:27am:** Reaches Apollo hospital, 3 km from Goutham's residence in just 5 minutes
- 9:13am:** Apollo hospital confirms Minister's demise

## Cabinet colleagues pay tributes

**PNS** VIJAYAWADA

Cabinet colleagues of IT & Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy have recalled their association with him.

YSRCP held a condolence meeting in honour of Goutham Reddy at the party central office. Municipal Administration Minister Botsa Satyanarayana, Endowments Minister Vellampalli Srinivas, Agriculture Minister Kurasala Kannababu, MLA Merugu

Nagarjuna and MLC Lella Appi Reddy paid floral tributes to him and extended deepest condolences to the family members.

"I'm still unable to digest the sudden demise of Goutham Reddy. He was such a young and dynamic leader and had a lot of future. He was everything to his father Mekapati rajamohan Reddy.

The State had lost a great leader," said Energy Minister Balineni Srinivas Reddy.



## FODDER SCAM CASE Five-year jail term for Lalu

**PNS** RANCHI

A special CBI court on Monday sentenced RJD Supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav to five years in prison and slapped a fine of Rs 60 lakh on him in connection with the Rs 139 crore fodder scam where the Doranda treasury allegedly embezzled. The court pronounced the sentence on the quantum of sentence after virtually hearing arguments.

## Multiple factors cause sudden death: Experts

**C PRADEEP KUMAR**  
VIJAYAWADA

There has been a lot of talk these days about the sudden collapse of young and middle-aged after a workout at the gym, exercise, walking, or jogging. If one thinks that heart attack is the only reason for it, one is thoroughly mistaken, say, senior cardiac specialists.

There are many reasons, including those related to the heart. Undiagnosed coronary artery disease, accumulation of fat in the blood vessels of the heart, is one of the reasons, says a cardiac surgeon. The other reasons are Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), Septal Hypertrophy, Mitral Valve Prolapse



(MVP), arrhythmic tendency, usage of QT extending drugs, self-medication, use of food supplements and dehydration after an intense exercise session.

### 'Mental fitness, diet plan key to physical well-being'

Exercise and workouts on a daily basis are good for health. However, a good diet plan plays a key role in keeping a person fit and healthy, says gym trainer Ch Raju. "One will be healthy if they do exercise and take the required calories of balanced food to stay good," he said. Unlike the old days when only retired people or the elderly went on morning walks, nowadays, people of all age groups are health cautious and go for morning walks, attend exercise sessions or hit the gym, which is a change for good.



## Interlinking a disaster

**PNS** HYDERABAD

The interlinking of the Godavari and Cauvery could affect local ecology, especially aquatic life, in not just the two rivers but in four river basins. While Andhra Pradesh

has agreed to the proposal to link the Godavari and Cauvery rivers, Telangana has demanded a hydrology study on the availability of water in the Godavari.

## India showcases Naval prowess at Presidential Fleet Review

**PNS** VISAKHAPATNAM

President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of India, Ram Nath Kovind reviewed the Indian Navy Fleet in Visakhapatnam on Monday. With the theme '75 years in Service of the Nation', Indian Navy showcased its latest state-of-art indigenously built combat platforms during the 12th edition of the Fleet Review which was also conducted as part of the 75th anniversary of India's Independence being celebrated as 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

After a 21-gun salute and ceremonial guard of honour, the President embarked on the Presidential yacht, INS Sumitra, an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel designated as the Presidential yacht.



President Ram Nath Kovind reviews the Naval fleet in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

The Yacht sailed past 44 ships from the Navy, Coast Guard, SCI and MoES lined up in four columns at anchorage off Visakhapatnam, exhibiting the nation's maritime

power in full display. A spectacular flypast was conducted as a part of the static review of the fleet. During the final stage of the review, a mobile column of warships and sub-

marines carried out high-speed steam past alongside the presidential yacht. Several enthralling waterfront activities by parade of sails, search and rescue demonstration at sea, aerobatics by Hawk aircraft and Water Para Jumps by the elite Marine Commandos (MARCOS) mesmerised the guest.

As the presidential yacht passed between the review columns, each ship dressed in full regalia, manned by her ship's company saluted the President with traditional "Three Jais" in a demonstration of the unconditional allegiance to the country and the Supreme Commander. The President also witnessed demonstrations in the form of a composite flypast by 55 aircraft including Chetaks, ALH, Sea Kings, KAMOVs, Dorniers, IL-

38SD, P8I, Hawks and MiG 29K. Addressing the Fleet during the Review, the Hon'ble President said that the Indian Navy's constant vigil, prompt response to incidents and untiring efforts have been highly successful in ensuring the safety of the seas and of the maritime commons which are critical to our trade and energy needs. The President expressed his happiness at the Indian Navy becoming increasingly self-reliant and being at the forefront of the 'Make in India' initiative.

The review was followed by the release of a special first-day cover and a commemorative stamp by the President in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of State for Communication Shri Devusinh J Chauhan.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham:  
Tithi: Shashthi : Feb 21 07:57 PM to Feb 22 06:34 PM  
Saptami : Feb 22 06:34 PM to Feb 23 04:56 PM  
Nakshatram: Swati: Feb 21 04:17 PM to Feb 22 03:36 PM  
Vishaka: Feb 22 03:36 PM to Feb 23 02:40 PM  
Rahukalam: 3:23 PM to 4:50 PM  
Yamagandam: 9:36 AM to 11:03 AM  
Varjyam: 08:59 PM to 10:31 PM  
Gulika: 12:29 PM to 1:56 PM  
Amritakalam: 07:03 AM to 08:36 AM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:06 PM to 12:52 PM

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Partly cloudy  
Temp: 36°C  
Humidity: 55%  
Sunrise: 6:32 AM  
Sunset: 6:16 PM  
Updated: February 21, 2022 5:00 PM

# People have rejected evil political forces ganging up against BJP

Today Telangana State Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao reminds one of Telugu Desam Party supremo Chandrababu Naidu prior to the 2019 elections. Having severed ties with the BJP then, Naidu had joined hands with the Congress to play a crucial role in national politics, but drew flak. Similarly, in the name of Federal Front, KCR had approached CMs of regional parties then, but fell flat as BJP was voted to power at the Centre in 2019.

The BJP has never practised politics with an eye on power. BJP's ideology, be it with just two seats as in the past or with the majority with which it has been voted to power at the Centre for the last two terms, remains more or less the same. The agenda promised to people some decades ago is being implemented by the party.

The BJP relinquished power during the Janata Party regime for the sake of ideology. The

BJP fell out with the National Front government and withdrew support to it in 1990 when Kashmiri Hindus fled J and K for their lives, fanning out in various directions and when the VP Singh government tried to halt the Ram Rath Yatra.

When Atal Behari Vajpayee was at the helm of affairs, the BJP had lost power by a margin of just one vote, since it had stuck to its ideology and refused to indulge in irregularities. The BJP has stalwarts like LK Advani who had refused to contest the elections till his name had been cleared from the Jain Hawala scandal. Those who are familiar with history of the BJP and that of its earlier form Jan Sangh can understand how the BJP government, led by PM Narendra Modi, works relentlessly to implement its ideology.

The BJP, under the Narendra Modi regime, has struck terror in the hearts of those who have no political

**In UP, Samajwadi Party, BSP and many other outfits tried to stall the march of the BJP to victory and received complete drubbing at the hustings. Can the parties that are incapable of locking horns with the BJP at the regional level clash with the BJP at national level?**

ideology, those who have set their sights on indulging in corruption and amassing wealth, and those who practise politics of dynasty. All evil forces are ganging up against the BJP to stall its march. People have rejected evil political forces. For instance, people of Bihar knew the extent of corruption, misdeeds, and illegal activities perpetrated in the regime of RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav. In the last elections, RJD, Congress and other parties joined hands against the BJP-JD (U) alliance and tried to deal a crippling blow to it. But people voted the BJP-JD (U) combine to

power. In UP, Samajwadi Party, BSP and many other outfits tried to stall the march of the BJP to victory and received complete drubbing at the hustings. Can the parties that are incapable of locking horns with the BJP at the regional level clash with the BJP at national level? What is the purpose behind the desire of KCR, Mamata Bannerjee and Uddhav Thackeray to form a front? KCR has realised that his regime would come to an end soon as he has been acting like a dictator, treating ministers, party activists and people as



**Y SATYA KUMAR**  
BJP National Secretary

his vassals. People have seen through the thousands of crores of corruption that he, his family members, and aides had indulged in the name of construction of irrigation projects. Having spent in vain crores of rupees in the recent by-elections to Dubbak and Huzurabad Assembly seats and in the GHMC elections to retain power, he has understood that the days of the TRS are numbered.

Students and leaders who had fought relentlessly for Telangana alongside KCR during the movement have deserted the TRS and joined the BJP. So, KCR is trying to move closer to other regional party leaders by indulging in personal criticism of Modi. That is why, he is holding talks with Congress and NCP, which had sacrificed their ideology after being rejected by people and are with Shiv Sena, which has lust for power.

Late Bal Thackeray floated Shiv Sena to groom it as a party based on ideology. None knows how much his soul might have withered in pain upon watching his son Uddhav Thackeray hobnobbing with immoral parties like Congress and NCP and joining hands with opportunists like KCR and making anarchic forces like Prakash

Raj sit beside him? Maharashtra, under the rule of Uddhav Thackeray, slipped to fifth position in terms of development. The unholy alliance government, headed by Uddhav, saw death of thousands due to Covid-19 in Maharashtra. Suspicious death of actor Sushant Singh Rathode, resignation of home minister Anil Deshmukh in money laundering case and resignation of forest minister Sanjay Rathode in connection with the death of a woman stand make it clear that Maharashtra, under Uddhav Thackeray, has become home to drugs, mafia gangs, economic offenders and immoral people.

Parking of a vehicle with detonators in front of the house of industrialist Mukesh Ambani establishes the link between the police and mafia and stands as an example of the inefficient rule of Uddhav

Thackeray. People have been closely watching the leaders of the three parties joining hands only to indulge in corruption without any ideological base. Thackeray knows that it is not easy to prevent the BJP from coming to power. That is why he staged histrionics in the name of floating a front on the lines of

Mamata Bannerjee also clearly understood BJP's mettle in West Bengal. In 2019 LS elections, BJP won 19 LS seats in Bengal, while the 2021 Assembly elections helped BJP win 77 seats. Therefore, the BJP emerged as a strong opposition in Bengal. The vote share of the BJP improved drastically to 38.14 per cent in 2021 as against 0.4 per cent in 1984.

These leaders have targeted Modi only to safeguard their fiefdoms. Is it possible for them to win at the national level without winning in their home ground?



## Mekapati Goutham Reddy dies of cardiac...

**Continued from Page 1**

Until last week, he was seen actively participating in the Dubai Expo in UAE promoting Andhra Pradesh, pitching for investments. He returned to Hyderabad from Dubai early hours of Sunday and had an appointment with Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday to brief him about the MoUs signed during the Dubai Expo where Andhra Pradesh pavilion has been set up.

According to Goutham Reddy's staff, he was seen collapsed in the sofa at his Jubilee Hills residence on Monday morning. He collapsed around 7am complaining of chest pain while getting ready to go to the gym which is his regular routine. "This morning, Goutham Reddy was brought to Apollo hospitals,

Jubilee Hills, in an emergency. He had collapsed suddenly at home. He arrived into our ER at 07:45am and was unresponsive, not breathing and in cardiac arrest on arrival. He received immediate CPR and advanced cardiac life support in our emergency department. The emergency medicine team and specialists including cardiologists and critical care doctors have attended to him. CPR was done for more than 90 minutes. Despite our best efforts, he could not be revived. He was declared to have died at 9:16 am today morning. We are supporting his family to the best extent possible in this difficult time," said a spokesperson of Apollo Hospital.

It is his morning routine to get up around 6 am, have coffee and go to the gym. At times, he would go

to the gym morning and evening. On Sunday, after returning from Dubai, Goutham Reddy spent all the day at his residence and in the night it is learnt that he had attended an engagement function and returned home around 9.30 p.m. - 10 pm and retired for the day.

Last rites will be held with state honours at Brahmanapalli in Nellore district on Wednesday as the family is awaiting Goutham Reddy's son to reach India from the US. Till Monday, the mortal remains will be kept for visitors at his Jubilee Hills residence. On Tuesday, the body will be shifted to Nellore.

Last rites will be held on the premises of the Merits Engineering College in Udayagiri of Nellore district at 11 am on Wednesday.

### CM rushes to Hyd...

**Continued from Page 1**

He expressed profound grief over the sudden death of Mekapati Goutham Reddy. The Chief Minister, along with his wife YS Bharathi Reddy, rushed to Hyderabad and paid floral tributes at the minister's residence and consoled the bereaved family members sharing emotional moments. The government has declared a two-day state mourning and the final rites will be held with full state honours. The Chief Minister was deeply shocked with the untimely demise of Mekapati Goutham Reddy and consoled family members of the deceased. He sat beside former MP M Rajamohan Reddy, father of the departed minister and consoled the bereaved family.

Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, MPs V Vijayasai Reddy, YS Avinash Reddy, Alla Ayyodhya Rami Reddy, TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, Ministers Adimulapu Suresh, Kodali Venkateswara Rao, Anil Kumar Yadav and MLA Chivireddy Bhaskar Reddy were among those who paid tributes to the departed Minister. Earlier, at the Camp Office, the Chief Minister convened a meeting and recalled his association with Goutham Reddy. The Chief Minister said that he was well-acquainted with him since childhood and said it was a great void to lose a good friend and a great leader. Further, the Chief Minister said that Goutham Reddy has brought fame to the State by effectively implementing the government's transparent industrial policies.

## An avid fitness enthusiast...

**Continued from Page 1**

He had spent almost a week in Dubai participating in the expo. He is also known to be soft spoken and affable leading a very stress free lifestyle.

While he had his college education in Hyderabad, Goutham Reddy did M.Sc in Textile Technology from University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), in the UK in 1997. Before joining active politics, he was one of the directors in the family company KMC Constructions and looked after the business.

Continuing his father's political legacy, Goutham joined YSRC in 2014 as Rajamohan Reddy retired from active pol-

itics. Goutham Reddy was elected to the Assembly from the Atmakur constituency in his native Nellore district in 2014 and retained the seat in 2019.

Due to his close association with Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy he was given an important and key portfolio of IT and industries in the State Cabinet.

Just when the entire economy had been opening up after the disastrous Covid-induced situation and his efforts to make Andhra Pradesh a preferred destination for investments was about to bear fruits Goutham Reddy passed away.

He has been instrumental in laying the foundation for creat-

ing ports, logistics and aviation infrastructure in the state. It was in his tenure that the DPRs for the development of non-major ports at Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam and Bhavanapadu were finalised and tenders were floated. While the tenders for Bhavanapadu and Ramayapatnam were finalised.

Goutham Reddy was also successful in grounding the innovative Work From Home Town concept for the benefit of IT companies and employees. He worked swiftly to establish the Greenfield steel plant at Jagan Mohan Reddy's home district Kadapa and also cleared pending issues with the Centre to set up a Petrochemical complex at Kakinada.

## Goutham played a stellar...

**Continued from Page 1**

Indian Business and Professional Group (IBPG), and ICAI chapters of Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

The state has entered into MoUs with 5 major companies Regency Group (Hyper retail markets and Food processing unit), Mulk Holdings (Aluminium Coils & Panels manufacturing), Sharaf Group (Integrated Logistics park), Tabreed (Sustainable Cooling infrastructure) and Causis e-mobility Pvt Ltd (Electric Buses), with an intent to invest over Rs 5,150 crore and generate employment of 3,440 directly and 7,800 indirectly. Further, the delegation had advanced discussions with major firms, to finalize their

investment interests into sectors such as Gypsum board building materials (Rs 600 crore and employment of 300), Automotive and batteries (Rs 105 crore and employment of 300), Food processing (Rs 150 crore and employment of 300), Consumer and Industrial packaging unit (Rs 100 crore and employment of 200), Pre-fabricated structures development (Rs 250 crore and employment of 200), Innovation shared services center focused on delivering digital solutions across healthcare, cloud governance, utilities, education, and industrial automation using AI and ML technologies, and setting up of Tertiary Multi-specialty hospital as part of the Health Hubs scheme of the state.

## Multiple factors cause sudden death: Experts

**Continued from Page 1**

According to experts, most deaths are caused by arrhythmic VF ventricular fibrillation, VT ventricular tachycardia and some others by ACS Acute Coronary Syndromes, which means coronary spasm caused by fatty deposits in the blood vessels. One should get a proper cardiac checkup before deciding to go for intense exercise routines or gym programmes. It is very important to assess the risk of a heart problem. It is advised that one should get their heart checked after 40 years. Tests like ECG, ECHO

Cardiogram and Treadmill Test or Stress Test should be done.

Dr. C Prabhakar Reddy, the cardiac surgeon, says that one should be cautious after 40 years as there is a risk of heart disease. Heart issues are caused by smoking, consuming alcohol, diabetes, hypertension, lack of exercise, high-calorie carbohydrate diet, excessive work pressure, stress, and heart disease. Some people in the high-risk category should have a CT Angiogram once every five years and calcium score should be tested to know if there are any block-

ages of blood vessels. Lipid profile, hypertension, and diabetes tests should be taken at least once a year after the age of 35, said the doctor.

He said that Syncopal Attacks among people with a history of Syncope, those with a family history of sudden death, should be very careful. "In case of a heart attack, two aspirin tablets should be chewed and swallowed. Otherwise, no matter how big the hospital is, none can save the patient," said Dr. Prabhakar Reddy, and added that after 40 years one has to get regular checkups to their health issues to stay safe.

### 'Mental fitness, diet plan key to physical well-being'

**Continued from Page 1**

Extreme exercise, though, is not advised in general to people as it requires many other conditions to be followed. During the present times, many people start working out, going to the gym or exercising for a purpose and after a while, they suddenly stop, which leads to a few problems like being overweight. For example, people come to the gym to get a good look for the matrimonial alliance or for a photoshoot, or for other purposes. Once their

target is over, they put an end to exercise or gym sessions. Gym trainer Raju said that during the workouts, people take a balanced and good diet; however, after stopping workouts, they don't maintain the old food habits that may lead to many issues. "The people who come to the gym are fit as we guide them to exercises that are suitable for them as per their age, height and weight under the guidance of certified trainers. We also prescribe a healthy and protein-rich diet to enable them to live a

healthy life. After doing exercise, people will feel happy and good the whole day," he said. He added that people, after the workouts, should maintain their diet carefully avoiding junk food. Meanwhile, psychiatrist Dr. Indira Rama Subba Reddy says that exercise gives physical fitness, but one should give importance to psychological fitness as well. He said that one should give time for mental fitness, meditation, social service activities and reading to stay healthy.

### CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Dressed/With Skin | ₹200 |
| Without Skin      | ₹220 |
| Broiler at Farm   | ₹130 |

### EGG RATES ₹/100

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| VIJAYAWADA    | 415   |
| VISAKHAPATNAM | 425   |
| HYDERABAD     | 388   |
| RETAIL PRICE  | ₹4.15 |

### Cabinet colleagues pay tributes

**Continued from Page 1**

Trade and industry fraternity also expressed grief over the sudden demise of Goutham Reddy. CII Andhra Pradesh Chairman, D Tirupathi Raju, in a statement, expressed deep shock and profound grief over the untimely demise of Goutham Reddy. He said Goutham Reddy was a great friend of CII and the industry and CII Andhra Pradesh had the opportunity to work with

him closely on strategic imperatives for the development of the state and promoting Andhra Pradesh as best investment destination.

Termining him a visionary leader, who had shown greater determination to address the concerns of the industry during Covid-19. "In fact, he played a key role in framing Andhra Pradesh Industrial Development Policy 2020-23 in consultation with all stakeholders.

### Five-year jail term for Lalu

**Continued from Page 1**

"Lalu Prasad has been sentenced to 5 years imprisonment while a penalty of Rs 60 lakh has also been imposed on him. Apart from Prasad, five years imprisonment each was announced by the Court for five convicts, four years each for 32 convicts and three years each for three convicts," CBI counsel BMP Singh told PTI. "Fine imposed on convicts

ranges from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2 crore," Singh said adding that the highest amount of Rs 2 crore penalty was imposed on supplier Tripurari Mohan Prasad.

After his conviction in Rs 139.35 crore Doranda treasury embezzlement case, the fifth and final one against him in the multi-crore fodder scam on February 15, the ailing 73-year old former Bihar chief minister was lodged in the Birsu Munda Central Jail

and then shifted to state-run Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi on health grounds. The ebullient leader suffers from multiple ailments, including renal problems.

In jail since December 2017, Prasad served most of his sentence period at the RIMS. He was taken to All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi in January last year after his health condition deteriorated.

## Mudragada urges GVL to back demand for Kapu quota

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP GVL Narasimha Rao called on former minister and Kapu leader Mudragada Padmanabham at his residence in Kirlampudi in East Godavari district on Monday.

Mudragada urged GVL to extend support to the reservations demand of the Kapu community. Mudragada and other Kapu leaders explained to GVL the injustice being meted out to the Kapu community for the last three decades, BJP sources said.

GVL told Mudragada that the BJP is committed to providing reservations to the Kapu community and he reminded him that recently he raised the issue in the Parliament. "The political parties have deceived the Kapu community people by not providing reservations. Providing reservations to the Kapus is a state subject and Centre has nothing to do in



BJP MP GVL Narasimha Rao called on Kapu leader at his residence in Kirlampudi in East Godavari district on Monday.

this regard" GVL explained to Mudragada, sources added.

GVL told Mudragada that reservations were provided to the Kapu community people during the period of British rule but later they were removed. BJP would give due importance to the welfare of Kapus, he informed Mudragada Padmanabham, according to BJP sources. Clarifying on meeting Mudragada, GVL said that he went to Annavaram temple and met Mudragada as a courtesy. He said that he had also met another Kapu leader Chegondi Harirama Jogaiah.

## Interlinking a disaster

**Continued from Page 1**

But ecologists suggest that the interlinking of the rivers can threaten the diversity and the general health of species living in them. In the case of Godavari and Cauvery, it can threaten aquatic organisms in four rivers at least.

Every river has a unique biodiversity and their interlinking can affect native species due to invasion by non-native species. Experts recall that during Pattiseema interlinking, the native species of Godavari entered Krishna River damaging fishing nets at the Prakasam Barrage.

The carnivorous fish Rakashi appeared in 2016 in the Krishna and was reportedly spotted only after the Pattiseema interlinking.

An expert on condition of anonymity said, "The proposed Godavari-Cauvery interlinking is a basin to basin transfer. The ecosystem of not only these two rivers but also the three basins of Krishna and Penna needs to be studied as the ecology of these rivers also will become vulnerable. There is a chance of smaller river basins also getting impacted, based on the final alignment. There are species unique to each river and they have to be studied. The impact of the transfer of a species from one river to another has to be studied. An environment impact study has to be done. Earlier in AP, a university

suggested that benefits may outweigh problems."

The study done in 2016 said that the interlinking of rivers may affect native aquatic species' breeding and feeding. They even warned of the extinction of some native species.

Experts also say that already the natural flow in the river has been affected by dams and bridges and that the species have adapted to the changes.

Dr Vibha Dhawan, the Director-General of TERI said, "The programme of interlinking certain rivers is aimed at managing water resources better. The species that thrive and draw nourishment from a particular river will not disappear. Since the environment will remain the same, one can expect some changes in the population density of flora and fauna, but that can be discounted in the evolving ecosystems."

Meanwhile, Waterman Rajendra Singh has also flagged the issue repeatedly, particularly during his trip last week to Hyderabad. "The 'draft river manifesto' which will be finalised during the National Convention on Rivers being held in Hyderabad on February 26 and 27 would also oppose the linking of rivers."

"River linking is nothing but commercialisation of rivers. Linking of rivers will lead to destruction rather than development.

**Andhra Pradesh Digital Corporation Limited, Guntur Dist. AP (Government of AP Undertaking)**  
REF No. 001/APDCL/RFE-SMP DAA-01/2022  
Extension of last date to Request for Empanelment (EFE) of Social Media Platforms and Digital Advertising Agencies with AP Digital Corporation. Original Date of Publication of the tender schedule : 31-01-2022. Last date for submitting the Request for Empanelment of Social Media Platforms and Digital Advertising Agencies with AP Digital Corporation has been extended till 29th Feb 2022. Further details can be viewed in the websites [www.apdc.gov.in](http://www.apdc.gov.in), [www.apdc.ap.gov.in](http://www.apdc.ap.gov.in). For any enquiries, please contact : VC & MD, APDCL : 9959988888. Sd/- Vice-Chairman & Managing Director, APDCL, Tadepalli, Guntur Dist., AP. DFR No. 385/CL/Advt/2021-22, Dt: 21-02-2022

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# Speaker Tammineni recalls association with Goutham

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Expressing their strong shock at the sudden demise of Minister for Industries and IT, M Goutham Reddy, leaving aside their differences, all political parties and leaders from across North coastal AP paid their rich tributes to him.

Political leaders, trade unions, bureaucrats, industrialists, trade and commerce representatives expressed their shock over the sudden demise of Goutham Reddy.

At a condolence meeting, Speaker, AP Legislative Assembly Tammineni Sitharam, said he failed to digest the news of the sudden demise of Goutham Reddy. He recalled his association with Reddy in the Assembly sessions.

Senior leader and MLA, YSR Congress Dharmana



He failed to digest the news of the sudden demise of Goutham Reddy. He recalled his association with Reddy in the Assembly sessions.

Prasada Rao said that he expected Goutham Reddy would have a great political future and reach new heights in his career. Prasada Rao said that his soul should rest in peace.

The TDP, CPM, CPI and Jana Sena Party leaders at separate announcements paid their tributes to Goutham Reddy and quoted that he was

one of the rare politicians and ministers.

Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries and several other associations have expressed their sadness at the sudden demise of Goutham Reddy. All the bureaucrats and other officials at separate programmes paid their tributes in the north Andhra region.

# Kovind lays stress on sustainable use of oceans

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Indians believe in security and growth for all in the region to focus on cooperative measures for sustainable use of oceans, said President of India Ram Nath Kovind. A large part of global trade flows through the Indian Ocean region. A significant portion of our trade and energy needs are met through the oceans, the President added.

Addressing the 12th edition of Presidential Fleet Review (PFR) of the Indian Naval Warships in the blue waters of Visakhapatnam on Monday, Ram Nath Kovind said that safety of the seas remains a critical requirement. The Indian Navy's constant vigil and prompt response to incidents and untiring efforts have been highly successful in this regard.

Mentioning his great pleasure to be part of the fleet reviewing the readiness of the naval ships, submarines, aircraft of naval ships and other elements of maritime power, the President said that it was an excellent experience to witness India's security power on the blue waters.

Specially mentioning the beauty of Visakhapatnam, the President said that it has been an important port for cen-

turies. Historically, it has been known as a crucial hub of transnational trade and commerce. From the sixth century before the common era to the 21st century, Visakhapatnam continues to be an important centre for industry and economy. Its strategic importance is underlined by the fact that the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy, he added.

While revealing about the 1971 war and Visakhapatnam's significant role, the President said that the Golden Jubilee celebrations of India's victory in that war, under 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh', concluded recently. The President recalled the heroic action of the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) in the naval blockade of the then East Pakistan and the sinking of Pakistan's submarine 'Ghazi'.

About 70 per cent of the contents of several warships and submarines under construction in various public and private shipyards across the country are indigenous. It is a matter of great pride that India has built nuclear submarines and soon would have indigenously built an aircraft carrier, 'Vikrant', joining the service.



# NSTL to offer course in 'vibration' trends

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) is conducting a continuing education programme course on "Emerging Trends in Vibration and Control" during February 21-25 in virtual mode.

PVS Ganesh Kumar, Outstanding Scientist and Course Director briefed about the course and said that the course broadly covers the lat-



est trends followed in vibration and noise control, particularly indigence applications. He informed that about 100 participants have enrolled for the course from various DRDO

labs and some of the Indian Naval units.

Dr. V Bhujanga Rao, Distinguished Scientist and Director General (Naval Systems & Materials) (Retired)

emphasized the importance of vibration and noise control in military and aerospace applications.

Dr. K Jagadisan, Outstanding Scientist (Retired), Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad stated that the course is very useful to learn the nuances of vibration and noise domain. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Y Sreenivas Rao, Director of NSTL, brought out that the laboratory has state-of-the-art vibration and noise facilities.



## Competency development prog for young managers on

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Atul Bhatt, CMD, RINL, inaugurated a three-day 'competency development' programme for young managers of RINL on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Atul Bhatt explained the present steel scenario and its importance, the need and demand for raw materials and uncertainty in the present market conditions.

He said that the organisation needed the change which was driven by young managers. The RINL has the capability to grow further to achieve 30-40MT in future. The young managers need to focus on self-development and also benefit the organisation to stand in the global competition, he said.

D.K. Mohanty, Director (Commercial), while addressing the young managers, highlighted the footprint of RINL in the international market by achieving sales of 1.3 MT during last year. The Indian steel production, which was 10 MT in 1980, was 118 MT in 2020, pointed out.

# Teachers to send one lakh requests on PRC to CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The government teachers in AP are intensifying protests seeking justifiable PRC, under which APUTF is sending one lakh requests to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. The teachers had opposed the agreement reached by government employees' unions and associations and the ministers' committee and are demanding a PRC with 27 percent fitment.

APUTF leaders G. Hrudaya

Raju, Ch Joseph Sudhir Babu and others said that teachers started sending requests to CM Jagan regarding the revision of the PRC with 27 percent fitment, resolving HRA objections and implementation of time scale to outsourced employees.

The teachers' union leaders said that they would send one lakh requests to the CM. The protest will continue till February 25. They said that a ballot would be held on PRC, HRA and other issues on February 24 and the results

would be sent to the government.

Besides, the teachers are planning to submit memorandums to ministers, MLAs, MLCs and MPs. The leaders stated that they were planning to write an open letter to the CM about the severe injustice meted out to the teachers in the new PRC. They said that the teachers were incurring huge losses due to the new HRA norms and affirmed that they would not back off until their demands were met.



## Book release marks Mother Language Day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark the International Mother Language Day on February 21, Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Academy Chairman P

Srilakshmi unveiled a collection of poems 'Madhuryan the Moksham' written by Dr KV Reddy. AP Kshetriya Corporation chairman P Sarraju, Dr Kavuri Srinivasa Sharma,

Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Sri Sri Kala Vedika president Dr Katti Manda Prathap and Philanthropic Society President Addanki Raja were present.

# 4 AP cricketers picked for Indian team

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Four cricketers from Andhra Pradesh have been selected for the Indian squad for the Triangular Series for the Blind-2022. The Cricket Association for the Blind in India (CABI) picked the team. Bangladesh and Pakistan are the other teams participating in the tournament.

The CABI has picked a 17-member squad for the T20 Series, which will be played in the UAE from March 13 to March 19. There will be a total of six League Matches and the Final which will be played on March 19.

by the Friends and Well Wishers of Cricket for the Blind from the UAE to promote Cricket for the Blind. The matches will be played at Skyline University College

The Indian Squad will also undergo a 10-day coaching camp in Bengaluru from March 1 to 11.

The Indian squad for the triangular series: Kalpesh Nimbalkar (Gujarat) B1, Venkateswara Rao (Andhra Pradesh) B1, Sujith Munda (Jharkhand) B1, Basappa

Waddagol (Karnataka) B1, Prem Kumar (Andhra Pradesh) B1, Praveen Kumar Sharma (Haryana) B1, D Venkateswara Rao (Andhra Pradesh) B2, A Maneesh

(Kerala) B2, Irfan Diwan (Delhi) B2, N a k u l B a d a n a y a k a (Odisha) B2, L o k e s h a (Karnataka) B2, Deepak Malik (Haryana) B3, Jayaramaiah

(Karnataka) B3, Sunil Ramesh (Karnataka) B3, Durga Rao (Andhra Pradesh) B3, Chandan (Uttar Pradesh) B3,

Rambir (Haryana) B3.

CABI president Dr Mahantesh G Kivadasannavar and founder managing trustee Samarathanam thanked the friends from the UAE for taking the initiative in promoting Cricket for the Blind and helping cricketers exhibit their talents, which will in turn help the players shine at a higher level. Dr Mahantesh said that the Triangular Series for the Blind would be played in the UAE after many years. He further said that the UAE had hosted various tournaments for the blind over the years and had been continuously supporting and promoting Cricket for the Blind.

# RGUKT signs MoU with EduSkills

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

RGUKT-Nuzvid entered into an MoU with Delhi-based EduSkills on Monday. RGUKT Director, Prof GVR Srinivasa Rao and Abhaji Jagadev, Co-founder & CEO, EduSkills exchanged the signed documents.

Addressing the media on the occasion, the Director said, "It gives immense pleasure to have reached an MoU with such a great organisation. EduSkills is a non-profit organisation which enables Industry 4.0 ready digital workforce in India. The vision is to fill the gap between Academia and Industry by ensuring world-class curriculum access to their



faculties and students."

He said that EduSkills wants to completely change the teaching methodologies and ICT-based education system in India. They work closely with all the important stakeholders in the ecosystem - students, faculties, educational institutions and Central/State Governments - by bringing

them together through their skilling interventions.

The objective of the programme is to impart training skills for the students where EduSkills is going to cover the Training, Global Certifications, MOU's, and Internships. The students will get the benefit in all the activities, the Director said.

# Centre, State financially burdening poor: APCUF

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Urban Civil Federation (APUCF) convener Ch Babu Rao has alleged that the State and Central governments are imposing financial burden on the poor in the name of free housing scheme in urban areas across Andhra Pradesh. Demanding that the State government complete TIDCO houses and Jaganna colonies immediately and hand them over to the poor, they would hold a protest across the State, he said.

Addressing media persons here on Monday, Babu Rao said that with the Central and

State governments jointly allocating only Rs 1.8 lakh to the beneficiaries, the houses were likely to remain incomplete. With Rs 1.8 lakh, the beneficiary can hardly purchase Iron, cement and sand, he said, and demanded that the amount should be increased to Rs 5 lakh or the government should construct the houses and hand them over to the beneficiaries.

"The YSRCP government accused the previous TDP government of deceiving the poor. After coming to power, the party has ignored the promise. The Central government is releasing the required funds while the State government is



not supplementing the funding, which affects the house construction scheme," he alleged.

Babu Rao pointed out that it had been five years since the construction of TIDCO, PMay houses began, but the governments had not handed over the houses to the beneficiaries.

# Unemployed youth ends life

PNS ■ KAKINADA

An unemployed engineering graduate allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a running train at Kesavaram village in Mandapet mandal on Monday, police said.

The deceased was identified as Koyyala Rambabu (29) of Dulla village in Kadiyam mandal.

The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for post-mortem.

# Naresh takes over as Regional ED of NTPC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Naresh Anand took over as the Regional Executive Director of NTPC, southern region, on Monday. Earlier, Anand was Member (Thermal), Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power, Government of India.

A mechanical engineering graduate from Punjab University, Chandigarh, Anand joined NTPC as an Executive Engineer trainee in 1984.

He has rich and varied experience in the areas of Mechanical Erection and Maintenance, MTP, Commercial, Business Development and Planning.

He held several important positions in a career spanning over 37 years and worked at NTPC Rihand (UP), Dadri (UP), National Capital Region Headquarters, Faridabad (Haryana), Corporate Centre (Delhi), Dulanga Coal Mine (Odisha), B a n g l a d e s h - I n d i a Friendship Power Company Limited, DBF Headquarters and Eastern Region Headquarters, Bhubaneswar.

# Naidu warns of stern action against inactive TDP leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday expressed serious concern that all sections of people have been suffering due to severe losses and setbacks in the past three years of the YSRCP government in Andhra Pradesh.

Naidu asserted that the 'one chance' given to CM Jagan Mohan Reddy would become his 'last chance' going by the popular discontent against his Government's policies.

Addressing a review meeting with party Assembly and Parliament segment in-charges, the TDP chief said there is a rising resentment of the local public against the ruling YSRCP MLAs' style of functioning and corruption. The TDP cadre should raise their voice to expose the illegals and misdeeds of the ruling party MLAs.

Chandrababu Naidu called upon the TDP local leaders to step up their fight. He gave a plan of action by speaking to all the 175 Assembly and 25 Parliament segment in-charges over zoom app.

Naidu said that Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power by using the 'one chance' slogan. But, his regime's failures



and illegal activities would make it his 'last chance'. "How could this Chief Minister do justice to five crore people when he couldn't give a fair treatment to his own sisters and mother? A state wide debate was going on about this," he said.

Condemning the government's 'negligence', Naidu deplored that with his inefficiency and selfish agenda, Jagan Mohan Reddy had destroyed all sectors of development and economy in the State. Even the people's welfare was being used only for personal agenda but not for the wellbeing of the beneficiaries. The artisans were the worst hit under the present regime.

The TDP chief stressed the need for relentless field-level struggles over the problems of farmers and the closure of schools in villages. CM Jagan Reddy's true colours were

exposed in the issue of the YS Vivekanand Reddy murder case. This issue should be taken to all sections of people so as to make them aware if the fark side if the CM's functioning.

Chandrababu Naidu urged the party cadre to fight against the rowdism and settlements of the ruling YSRCP leaders. The struggle against illegal mining gave good results in over five assembly segments. If the ruling party leaders had monkey and muscle power, the TDP cadre had got the people's trust and confidence. The TDP leaders should increase their visits to the villages in order to create more confidence in the public.

Naidu asserted that the party would not take a lenient view of those leaders who would not take part in field struggles actively. Stern decisions would be taken so as to take on the ruling party effectively. The leaders at all levels should be prepared for this.

Some TDP leaders said in the meeting that the TTD's decisions were in the manner of creating a distance between the God of Seven Hills and the devotees. The meeting concluded the death of Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family members.

# Anganwadi workers stage dharna for minimum wages

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A large number of Anganwadi workers on Monday staged dharnas across the State demanding Rs 26,000 minimum wages. The Anganwadi union gave a call for a 'Chalo Collectorate' programme.



In Ongole, the police prevented the Anganwadi women from going into the Collector's office. The police and the Anganwadi workers jostled for some time at the Collector's office. However, the police prevented them.

In Guntur, a large number of Anganwadi teachers and workers squatted in front of the Collector's office raising slogans to hike their wages. In Anantapur, they went to the Collector's office in a rally demanding to make them eligible for welfare schemes. In Srikakulam, the police prevented the agitating Anganwadi workers at the Palakonda RTC complex. In Chittoor, a tense situation prevailed at the Collector's

office when the police arrested and whisked them away the agitating Anganwadi workers. A similar protest was also organised in Machilipatnam. The agitating

Anganwadi workers warned of intensifying agitation if the government did not concede their legitimate demands of wage hike and Rs 5 lakh retirement benefit.



## Collector reviews redressal of Spandana grievances

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Collector Pravin Kumar vented his anger over the officials here on Monday over improper redressal of grievances. At a review meeting here on Monday the Collector took serious note of the Spandana grievances appearing in websites. He said that since the officials were not resolving the Spandana grievance accurately, the petitioners were approaching again to get their grievances resolved. He warned of suspending the delinquent officials if the

grievances were not resolved accurately. The Collector enquired why some officials were absent to the meeting. He said that no progress was noticed at the ground level and asked whether they were working as per the guidelines. He asked the officials to issue show-cause notices to those who did not attend the meeting. He also directed the DROs to suspend the mandal level officers where a large number of grievances were piled up unresolved. Pravin Kumar expressed displeasure over the EOPRDs

for working without knowing the norms and guidelines. Joint Collector Venkata Murali directed the officials to clear the applications seeking house sites. He said that during 90 days over 1000 applications were received of which 665 were found eligible to be allocated house sites and asked the officials to do mapping in the plots for allocating plots to them. Joint Collectors TS Chetan, KS Viswanathan, K Krishnaveni and DRO P Srinivasulu were among those who attended the meeting.

## AP reports lowest count of Covid cases since Jan 3

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh reported 182 fresh cases of Covid-19 on Monday, the lowest count in a day after January 3. According to the latest bulletin, 950 infected people got cured and one more succumbed in 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday. The total number of coronavirus positives now stood at 23,16,467, recoveries at 22,95,768 and deaths 14,714. The number of active cases in the state was now 5,985, the bulletin added. Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts did not report any fresh case in 24 hours while Kurnool added just one. Three more districts logged fresh cases in single digit. East Godavari registered the highest number of 70 new cases while the remaining six added less than 25 each. Only Chittoor district witnessed one Covid-19 death in a day.

## Manual scavengers fall prey to unscrupulous contractors

Fund crunch, procedural lapses prevent payout to kin of those killed while on duty

DEEPIKA PASHAM ■ HYDERABAD



The 'most happening' Hyderabad city is somewhat clean and stench-free as manual scavengers are active, dutifully removing human waste from sewers. Sadly, some of these cleaners die of suffocation while on duty or otherwise fall prey to unscrupulous contractors who do not provide them with security or basic safety gear.

Since the state government does not employ them directly, manual scavengers are often left to die by errant contractors. Of late, even support from NGOs has hardly been of any direct help to manual scavengers. For instance, the NGO Safai Karmachari Andolan has been after officials seeking help for 45 members who are eligible to get Rs 10 lakh sanctioned as per an order of the Supreme Court.

"We were sanctioned Rs 10 lakh per family for 11 people, but the rest are still in the process stage. We are informed that there were errors in the data collected and, other than this we have no information regarding the movement of files. As per recent data, four people have died while on duty in Saidabad, Kondapur and Manikonda in Hyderabad," the state convener of the NGO said. The state government, instead of coming to the aid of these manual scavengers, is still accepting tenders for manual scavenging from contractors who provide no security to the scavengers, he said. The contractors have no

consideration for the workers and force them to clean sewers manually, thinking that it would take only a few hours. However, the workers are exposed to dangerous sewage gases and they die, he added. Another problem is construction wastes that get washed away in the rains and enter sewage pipelines. This can injure persons who clean the sewers, he added.

"We have approached Lokesh Kumar, GHMC Commissioner, and have entered details in the files at his office as he ordered, but no one has approached us regarding it. We gave representations to KTR and KCR requesting to sanction double bedroom houses to these families, but nothing was done, he said. Districts (BOX) Districts like Mahbubnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Sangareddy etc. provide a different picture. In these districts officers spare no time to look at such issues. Nothing has been sanctioned to the families of manual scavengers in rural areas for four years, but officials are using their services.

On behalf of the NGO, legal notices have been sent to GHMC and HMWSSB. The notices were sent in vain as officials claim the government has no funds. "In the beginning of 2019,

## TO ESTABLISH OFFENCE OF BRIBE

### Proof of demand, acceptance essential, says Supreme Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Monday said the proof of demand for bribe by a public servant and its acceptance by the official is essential for establishing the offence under the provision of the anti-corruption law which relates to government servants taking illegal gratification. The apex court said that offence under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act relating to public servants taking bribe requires a demand of illegal gratification and its

acceptance. The section deals with offence by public servants taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act.

PC Act including under section 7. The offence under section 7 of the PC Act relating to public servants taking bribe requires a demand of illegal gratification and the acceptance thereof. The proof of demand of bribe by a public servant and its acceptance by him is sine qua non for establishing the offence under section 7 of the PC Act, the bench said in its 17-page judgement.

## TDP wants Kandukur in Prakasam

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders here on Monday met Collector Pravin Kumar and submitted a representation urging him to ensure that Kandukur constituency continued to be in Prakasam districts.

The TDP leaders led by former MLA D Shivaram submitted a memorandum to the Collector appealing him to take steps to keep the Kandukur constituency in



Prakasam district and keep the Kandukur Revenue Division continue to be in the district.

## AP High Court unhappy with YouTube over Prabhakar case

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prabhakar, they had not yet been deleted.

The Andhra Pradesh High Court, on Monday, expressed displeasure at YouTube in the case related to derogative posts on social media platforms against judges and the judiciary. The High Court was informed that blogger 'Punch' P r a b h a k a r uploaded the posts from a private user Id. It was further brought to the notice of the High Court that though Yoube was asked to delete the posts and videos of Panch



The HC asked the CBI what action was taken to arrest blogger Prabhakar. The CBI said that Prabhakar was an American citizen and to arrest him, they needed permission from the Central government. They had written to the Central government for permission and were awaiting a reply. The High Court ordered the CBI to file a counter with all details within 10 days and adjourned the case.

## Guidelines issued to check misuse of Govt bank accounts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has issued guidelines to ensure that the bank accounts of government departments and PSUs are not misused. The Finance Department has issued guidelines to control the opening of new bank accounts and fixed deposits and for withdrawing cash from deposits.

The government made it clear in its order that details about all government accounts in banks will be uploaded on the IFMIS portal immediately and will be examined to check whether the accounts were opened with permission from the government. The Finance Department has directed all departments to submit reports by March 10 in the pattern suggested by it.

The guidelines say that accounts should be kept only in empanelled banks. Govt departments and PSUs can open bank accounts and fixed deposit accounts, but they have no authority to deposit govt funds in fixed deposits.

The department heads concerned or drawing or financial officials have to supervise bank accounts and FD accounts jointly.

## KCR has ability to lead taking all together: Raut

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Monday said Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has the "ability to lead taking all together", a day after Rao met Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray and NCP president Sharad Pawar in a bid to bring together

like-minded parties against the BJP at the national level. Talking to reporters in Nagpur, Raut also claimed that the BJP will get defeated in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls which are currently underway. After meeting Thackeray in Mumbai on Sunday, Rao said he and the Maharashtra CM agreed that change is the need of the hour.



## SHORT TAKES



## 3 interstate burglars held, silver ornaments recovered

**KADAPA:** The police arrested three interstate burglars at the Chintapalli crossroad near Kalasapadu village, and recovered 1.143 KGs silver ornaments worth Rs 70,000 and Rs 8 cash from them. Police said that they belong to nomadic tribes and stay at the outskirts of villages in tents. The modus operandi of their crimes was that they would observe the temples without security and burglaries during the night. They would take away the temple hundi from the temple and break open at the outskirts of villages and make away with the money. He said that the three interstate burglars committed burglaries in many temples. The police recovered three silver crowns weighing 1.143 kg, Rs 70,000 cash, three bikes, and iron rods. SP KKN Amburajan appreciated the police team comprising DSP SR Vamsidhar, CI Ramesh Babi, and SI Ramanjaneyulu presented them a cash reward for resolving the temple thefts.

## NIT-AP researchers develop device to control electrical loads

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Researchers of the National Institute of Technology Andhra Pradesh (NIT-AP) have developed an 'Edge Computing Stack' to monitor and control electrical loads through Smart Powerline communications. This device is an Internet-of-Things (IoT)-based electrical switch designed to check the consumption of electrical appliances.

The device is unique due to its hybridised approach of power line communication and Wi-Fi and has published an Indian patent. It has been developed by Dr. Sri Phani Krishna Karri, Assistant Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, NIT-Andhra Pradesh, along with LN Sastry Varanasi, research scholar, Department of

Electrical Engineering, NIT-Andhra Pradesh. Highlighting the key aspects of this device, Dr. Sri Phani Krishna Karri, said, "The system addresses energy mismanagement at consumer end, which is a problem for both the utility company and customer. This product is intended to optimally manage electrical energy and monitor appliance level health by utilizing the

existing electrical infrastructure. This will also reduce the recurring maintenance cost and the power bill."

The system consists of two modules namely 'Master' and 'Slave'. The Master device communicates with a mobile device through a wireless medium. The Slave devices are directly connected to electrical appliances, which sense the voltage, current, power and power fac-

tor of each appliance. The sensed information is communicated to the Master device through a Power Line Communication (PLC). The system efficiently uses the existing electrical infrastructure as a communication medium inside the house or the organisation which records the consumption of each electrical appliance and makes it available

for the user to monitor and control via a mobile device remotely. Highlighting the commercialisation of the patent on this device, L N Sastry Varanasi, said, "We are planning to commercialise the product by establishing a start-up and growing as an individual entity. However, for wider outreach, we are looking at licensing the technology to develop various products."

The unique contribution of this patent is the optimal usage of both Wi-Fi and Power Line Communications whereas the existing solutions are mainly based on Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and a combination of both. The AI-based suggestive mechanism of this patent will help the user to get notifications regarding the health of the appliance.

## Elaborate arrangements at Kotappa Konda for Sivaratri

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Collector Vivek Yadav directed the officials to make all arrangements at the famous hill shrine Kotappa Konda Trikoteshwara Swamy temple to provide facilities and regulate devotees on Shivaratri Day on March 1.

The Collector along with Narasaraopet MLA Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy reviewed the arrangements with the officials here on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector directed all the officials to work in a coordinated manner to make the devotional event a success. The District Collector said that the Maha Shivaratri festival at the Kotappakonda Temple in

Narasaraopet which is headquarters for the newly formed Palnadu district, is of great significance.

The Collector directed the R&B and Panchayat Raj Engineering officials to complete the widening, development, and repair of major roads and link roads which lead to Kotappakonda by February 25. "Apart from crowd management and traffic jams, police and the R&B officials should coordinate in barricading and provide electricity where needed. He said Forest, RTC and R&B officials should take necessary steps to widen the roads in coordination without any hindrance to bus traffic on ghat road", he told them.



The temple officials were directed to take steps to provide fresh water, buttermilk and milk to the children in the queue lines and to maintain the sanitation. The district medical health department officials were directed to take precau-

tionary measures and distribute masks to the on-duty staff along with the sanitizer on the premises.

MLA Srinivasa Reddy said that the officials of all departments worked hard to ensure that the Kotappakonda

Shivaratri event was held peacefully and successfully. The MLA said that it is expected that more than 10 lakh devotees would throng the hill shrine on Shivaratri Day to have a darshan of the presiding deity.

The officials should be on high alert from 1 am on Mahashivaratri Day on March 1 till the morning of the second day after. The queue lines being formed for the VIPs and general public should be maintained properly, the MLA said. Joint Collector A S Dinesh Kumar informed that the officials and staff would work in three shifts constantly at the hill shrine monitoring the arrangements. He directed the officers to complete all the arrangements by February 25. Earlier, the Collector, MLA and other officials paid tributes to Industries minister M Gowtham Reddy who died in Hyderabad today.

INDIA CORNER

Ukraine crisis: Arrangements made to get students back, says MP Minister

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Monday said the government was concerned about students from the state stranded in Ukraine...



Body of yet another Rishiganga tragedy victim found

More than a year after the Rishiganga flash flood, the body of yet another victim was recovered on Monday from a tunnel at the NTPC's hydel project site in Tapovan.



Criminalising marital rape: HC refuses to grant more time to Centre

The Delhi High Court Monday refused to grant further time to the Centre to make its stand clear on the issue of criminalising marital rape and reserved judgement on various pleas in the matter.



Hijab not an essential religious practice, avers Karnataka govt

The Karnataka government on Monday reiterated that Hijab is not an essential religious practice and said religious instructions should be kept outside the educational institutions.



Justice J M Khazi and Justice Krishna M Dixit. According to the AG, only the essential religious practice gets protection under the Article 25, which guarantees

began, CJ Awasthi said certain clarifications were required related to Hijab. 'You have argued that government order is innocuous and the state government has not banned Hijab and not put any restrictions on it. The GO says that the students should wear the prescribed uniform. What is your stand -- whether Hijab can be permitted or not in the educational institutions?' the Chief Justice asked.

Such unity experiments have failed: Fadnavis

A day after Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao met his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray and NCP supreme Sharad Pawar in Mumbai to get parties to unite against the Narendra Modi government at the Centre, Maharashtra BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said such experiments had been carried out in the past and had failed.



these leaders had come together (to take on the BJP) ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. However, nothing came out of it. Such experiments (of unity of non-BJP parties) had been done in the past in several states but there was no effect, Fadnavis said.

ABG Shipyard CMD appears before CBI

Former Chairman and Managing Director of ABG Shipyard Ltd. Rishi Agarwal appeared before the CBI on Monday for questioning in connection with the Rs 22,848 crore alleged banking fraud, the biggest such case registered by the central agency, officials said.

Laws can't be changed for powerful, or ordinary : HC



The Kerala High Court on Monday said there cannot be two sets of laws -- one for the powerful and one for the ordinary citizens -- after noting that the Left government was unable to prevent flag masts being put up without permission by political parties despite the court's orders against the same.

UP polls: BJP gave step-motherly treatment to Raebareli constituency: Sonia Gandhi

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Monday accused the BJP of treating Raebareli as a step-motherly constituency and urged people to vote for her party candidates in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.



which is based on service of people and giving rights to people, she said. She said Congress workers have worked really hard in UP in last five years and 8,000 party workers were jailed while fighting for the rights of the people in the state.

Congress will protect Manipur's history, culture, language: Rahul Gandhi



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said that the party will protect the history, culture and language of Manipur which the BJP and RSS have undermined. The Lok Sabha MP also promised to give one-third reservation to women in Manipur, revive the MSME sector, make the

state self-sufficient in rice production, improve irrigational facilities, construct food parks and build more women-controlled 'Ima markets'. Addressing a public rally in Imphal, he said, 'BJP and RSS come to Manipur not with respect but with a sense of superiority.'

MEAs starts Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav fete

The Ministry of External Affairs began its 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav week' on Monday with its minister S Jaishankar saying the celebrations for 75 years of India's Independence are in line with the practice of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family)'.



Jaishankar said the celebrations, which were flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 12, 2021, are being marked with great enthusiasm across the globe through India's missions and posts.

he has been complying with all norms, rules, and regulations issued by the competent authorities. Advocate Rajeshwar Dagar, appearing for the petitioner, said unless he was allowed to open the spa centre, how can the authorities conclude that any illegal activities were going on there.

Maha govt hasn't done anything substantial: HC

The Bombay High Court on Monday said the Maharashtra government has not done anything substantial with regard to the installation of CCTVs in police stations across the state.



purpose of the Supreme Court order was to ensure transparency and hence, only 'paper compliance' would not suffice, the HC said. 'You (Maharashtra government) need to set up a committee to look into all this, otherwise no one would be bothered,' the court said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

# Divided Opposition?

Several parties are gearing up to take on the BJP in 2024, but are they together in it?

Something is cooking up in the Opposition camp. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's recent outburst against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his travel to Mumbai, his hour-long luncheon meeting with his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray, his hobnobbing with NCP supremo Sharad Pawar; all these seem part of a well-thought-out plan. KCR never hid his ambition to play a bigger role in national politics, but he shied away from taking on Modi in such a brazen manner in the past. In fact, the Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TSR) often came to the rescue of the NDA Government in the Rajya Sabha when the ruling alliance lacked a majority in the Upper House in the past. But KCR has finally shunned his hesitation and unleashed what many would call "below the belt" diatribes against the Prime minister, mocking his sartorial preferences, and calling him a "man on no substance". Taking his batter a notch higher, he didn't even receive the Prime Minister at the Hyderabad airport when Modi visited the State to inaugurate the statue of Sri Ramanujacharya. The message is loud and clear: KCR was out to play a national role and would vie with Mamata Banerjee to emerge as the glue to tie the Opposition together. The Bengal chief minister recently held a telephonic talk with KCR, during which the two leaders discussed the need to convene a meeting of Chief Ministers of the Opposition-ruled States to oppose the Modi Government's alleged misuse of the Central agencies against BJP's political rivals.



The rant against the alleged misuse of the Central agencies is not new. The real purpose of such an enclave is to discuss the framework to bring together the Opposition to dislodge the Modi Government from office in 2024. The recent meeting of poll strategist Prashant Kishor with Bihar Chief minister Nitish Kumar also seems part of the same strategy. Of late, the relation between the Janata Dal (U) and BJP has seen a sharp deterioration. The JD(U) has put up candidates against the BJP in both Uttar Pradesh and Manipur, and its leaders have been spewing venom against the saffron outfits' programmes and policies. Similarly, the BJP's Bihar leadership has been highly critical of Nitish Kumar's prohibition policy. Sources close to Nitish say that the Bihar CM might open up his cards after the outcome of the UP polls. Indeed, the results of the Assembly polls will greatly influence the move to cobble together the anti-BJP front. If the Congress managed to retain Punjab and win back Uttarakhand and Goa, it'll be difficult for the Opposition leaders to ignore the 'grand old party' out in the Opposition's scheme of things, though Mamata Banerjee has gone on record saying the Congress can go on its own way. Under the circumstances, the million-dollar question before the likes of Sharad Pawar, Mamata Banerjee or KCR is whether to walk hand in hand with Rahul Gandhi or let the Congress row its own boat.

## PICTALK



Fireworks illuminate the night sky during the closing ceremony of the 2022 Winter Games, in Beijing AP

# Together

Satraps are trying to dislodge the BJP but where is the glue to hold them together?

The song 'Happy Days Are Here Again' would possibly reverberate across the country if the efforts of three non-Congress and non-BJP Chief Ministers bear fruit and lead to the formation of a Third Front to take on the 'Hindutva' party in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Mamata Banerjee, K Chandrasekhar Rao and MK Stalin, the Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Telangana and Tamil Nadu, respectively, are on a mission to constitute a viable alternative for the people in time for the next Lok Sabha election. The three States contribute 98 out of the 543 total seats in the Lok Sabha and hence their bonding is a must for these leaders to reach the magic figure of 272. KCR was in Mumbai the other day, courting Maharashtra strongman Uddhav Thackeray and requesting him to join the proposed Third Front. Assuming that the three leaders succeed in forging a 'rainbow alliance' to take on the communalists, there are some questions that remain unanswered. Who will be the prime ministerial candidate? The voters have the right to know who would be the chief executive of the country, lest they would be left with the ignominy of watching persons like Deva Gowda and IK Gujral addressing the countrymen.



While there is no doubt about the competence and leadership qualities of Mamata, whose popularity is on an upward swing even in the southern State of Kerala, the same cannot be said about KCR and Stalin. Mamata fought her way to the top through hard work and intelligence. Stalin is in the present position only because he happens to be the son of late M Karunanidhi, the founder leader of the DMK and the five-time CM of Tamil Nadu. The silence of these leaders about the role of the Congress is baffling. BJP's veteran leader LK Advani had said in 1996 that it would be impossible for any political grouping to form a Government without the Congress or the BJP. The same holds true even now because Congress is the only party with a pan-India presence and acceptability. Memories of 2004 offer a ray of hope. It was Sonia Gandhi who took the initiative and walked that extra mile to forge the UPA bandwagon which won the election much to the shock of pollsters who had forecast a cakewalk victory for the 'Shining India' party. Sonia is capable of repeating the feat. The nation awaits its future.

# The Ukraine crisis: Its impact on India



DEEPAK SINHA

India has to tread a fine line in this imbroglio: Taking care of the welfare and evacuation of Indian students and the possibility of oil price hike

The face-off over Ukraine between Russia and the United States and its Nato allies has been dominating the headlines for a while now with tensions ratcheting up as we receive dire public warnings everyday of a Russian invasion any day now. Clearly, the possibility of Russian intervention there, and the consequent escalation of sanctions against them, is very real and concerning.

While Ukraine may be a developing country and the poorest in Europe, by no means is it a pushover. It is the second largest country there, behind Russia, by area, and in terms of population the eighth largest with its 42 million inhabitants. It has been independent since 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, though it had been a part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union since the 18th century. If there is one lesson that Putin and the Russian military should have learnt from America's disastrous interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan is that invasions are relatively easy to accomplish, but keeping restive and hostile populations under control is a wholly different proposition.

In any event, Putin and his advisors must clearly remember the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan that ultimately led to its collapse. Surely not worth the risk of repetition? He has already achieved much more than what we did during Operation Parakram. The ongoing imbroglio has its genesis in the Western funded 'Euromaidan' protests of November 2013 against pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich that ultimately led to his resignation. Those protests were strongly opposed by the Russian-speaking inhabitants of eastern Ukraine and pro-Russian politicians in power in Crimea and the port city of Sevastopol initiated a referendum there that resulted in the region breaking away and signing a Treaty of Accession with the Russian Federation, facilitated by the Russian military. Separately, the Donbas Region, which includes Donetsk and Luhansk Provinces in the East, became the focus of a separatist



struggle between Russian backed militia and the Ukrainian military. A conflict that continues to this day, despite the European Union, Russia and Ukraine having earlier agreed to a ceasefire following the signing of the Minsk Protocol.

Clearly the Ukrainians and the Europeans are pawns in this version of the 'Great Game 2.0' between Russia and the US. Russia's motives appear to be aimed at stopping Ukraine from joining Nato, thereby ensuring a buffer. Putin also probably wishes to reinforce his reputation as a strong nationalist leader by regaining some of the earlier clout that Russia enjoyed in the halcyon days of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, a deeply fractured US is keen to buttress its own domination over its Nato allies that had been adversely affected during President Trump's tenure.

Some analysts have suggested that the Americans are keen to goad Russia into invading Ukraine so as to bog them down in an unwinable conflict, while also adversely impacting growing cooperation between Russia and Germany on the energy front. A desperate attempt by President Biden, who over a

third of Americans believe is in office illegitimately, to reassert declining American power and enhance his own prestige.

Whatever the motives of either side, tensions in Ukraine have only added to our problems. Not only does the Indian Government find itself having to worry about the welfare and evacuation of the 20,000-odd Indian students there, but also faces increasing possibility of oil price hike and its implications for our economy in the event of a shooting war. Moreover, the Government is treading a fine line as it balances its response without damaging its relationship with either of the protagonists, with both of whom it has close ties. Also any escalation in Ukraine will shift focus and allow China an opportunity to act even more aggressively against us, Taiwan and the QUAD; much like the manner in which it got away by attacking us in 1962 while the US and the Soviet Union were focused on the Cuban Missile Crisis.

This crisis provides our Government an opportunity to focus on pursuing our own national interest to the full. Instead of our wishy-washy neutral stand, we must throw our full weight behind the side

that we perceive will help us to effectively counter China's aggressive designs. Otherwise, as in the past, we will once again be on our own with only token assistance being offered. The brutal truth is morals and values count for little and national interest is paramount. As Iqbal Chand Malhotra points out in his latest book, *Dark Secrets: Politics and Proxy Wars in Kashmir*, it was our good friend the Soviet Union that prodded Mao Zedong into illegally occupying and constructing a highway in the Aksai Chin so as to secure its access to the uranium mines there. For that matter, the traitorous actions of the British in not just ensuring Partition but also in organising the division of J&K, including the mutiny at Skardu, so that they had a suitable base in Pakistan from where they could keep an eye on the actions of the Soviet Union as well as control the access to oil through the Persian Gulf and protect other interests in South East Asia.

(The writer is a military veteran, who is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal.)



INSTEAD OF OUR WISHY-WASHY NEUTRAL STAND, WE MUST THROW OUR FULL WEIGHT BEHIND THE SIDE THAT WE PERCEIVE WILL HELP US TO EFFECTIVELY COUNTER CHINA'S AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ELEPHANTS ARE REALLY WONDROUS!

Sir — The write-up 'Wondrous ways of the elephant' (February 19) provides a good account of the intelligence and good behavioural aspects of elephants. There is much that we, humans, can learn from the family traits and courtly behaviour of elephants. Among animals, elephants have the largest brain, with an African elephant weighing around 4618 gm (approximately 10 pounds), which is three times larger than the human brain. No wonder then that elephants have attracted the admiration and curiosity of human beings for thousands of years. Scientists have long observed that elephant mothers and children stay together throughout life in tight-knit clans, caring for children and forming protective circles around calves.

Elephant clan members talk to one another with a combination of gentle chirps, thunderous trumpets and low-frequency rumbles, undetectable to humans. They deliberate among themselves, make group decisions and applaud themselves for their achievements. "Being part of an elephant family is all about unity and working together for the greater good," says Joyce Poole, one of the world's foremost elephant experts and co-founder of 'Elephant Voices', which promotes the study and ethical care of elephants.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

### BE CAUTIOUS AT RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Sir — More than 40 per cent of rail accidents occur at level crossings. There are more than 30,000 level crossings across rail routes, both manned and unmanned; the former being slightly higher than the latter. Over the years, the Railways has not allowed new unmanned crossings and manned crossings are provisioned only as a last resort. Overbridges for train movement are replacing level crossings. Two other solutions, apart from the overbridges are underbridges and road diversions. The Railways plans to remove more than 2500 level crossings by 2025. Between 2015 and 2020, 276 unmanned broad gauge crossings were removed.

Some were converted into manned crossings. Broadly, rail volume, road traf-

## Russia must be sensible



Russia, after being highly criticised and marooned by the western countries, took resort to a skirmish at kindergarten in Donbas by the pro-Russian separatists to deteriorate the already tense atmosphere. It reflects its devious plot to blame Ukraine through false flag operation for instant provocation and escalation. The blame game exchange has increased worries of western countries, mainly the UK and US who have held Russia responsible to foment trouble albeit it could have conceded for a mutual path. The muscle-flexing and shadow-boxing

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagrakote

and road conditions determine the necessity of level crossings. Maintenance of equipment and roads at level crossing cannot be overstated. Generally, road surface is broken at these crossings due to massive traffic flow and track upkeep procedures. At unmanned crossings, the danger of low visibility is greater. Gates and fencing of crossings, which are prone to frequent wear and tear, require prompt attention. However, more than anything else, patience and common sense of road users can be apt substitutes to all this.

Ganapathi Bhat | Bengaluru

### DO 'ABIDE WITH ME'

Sir — Mahatma Gandhi believed that it is the duty of every human being to study and respect every religion. In pursuit of this, he studied the holy scriptures of every religion. All his life, in all his ashrams in South Africa and in India, prayer services were held every morning and evening. In them, prayers from all religions were included and given equal importance. The

hymn 'Abide with me' was one of his favourite hymns and would be sung many a time. After Independence, when India became a republic, the Republic Day commemorations would end up with the Beating Retreat ceremony on Rajpath. Marching bands of all three services performed several songs.

'Abide with me' symbolises the syncretic culture of our nation where all religions are given an equal status and respect. This year inexplicably, the hymn was not sung. It was hurtful more so because the next day, January 30, was the day Mahatma Gandhi was martyred. My appeal to all the churches in India is to sing the hymn as often as they can during church services as a tribute to the Father of the Nation. Let us all make the singing, reciting or playing of the hymn our reply to the hateprevailing today.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

## SOUND BITE

We will transform Arunachal Pradesh into a major gateway to Southeast Asia.

Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

I'm very concerned about China pointing lasers on our aircraft... as an act of intimidation.

Australian PM — Scott Morrison

Right now, I am excited about going to the theatre to watch a film.

Actor — Mrunal Thakur

It's a special victory. Different guys stepped up at different times.

New Zealand cricketer — Tim Southee

It's neither discriminatory nor against any State. It's our responsibility to give jobs.

Haryana CM — ML Khattar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



# FIRST COLUMN THE RISE AND DECLINE OF SOCIOPATHY

Sociopaths are born, not made



GWYNNE DYER

I generally leave the psychohistory to Hari Seldon, but just this once I feel sufficiently motivated to venture into the field. The immediate spur for this departure is the spectacle - half-fascination, half-disgust - of Boris Johnson, Britain's part-time prime minister, gradually foundering in a sea of his own lies. But there are other examples, too.

There was Donald Trump just a year and a bit ago, trying to drag an entire country down with him and having some success in the enterprise.

There's Jair Bolsonaro, flailing around as he awaits almost inevitable defeat by 'Lula' in next October's Brazilian election.

There's Viktor Orban, astounded to face a united six-party opposition in Hungary's April elections.



And what they have in common is that they are all liars. Not shy, sly liars. Bold, in-your-face, shameless liars. They don't care if you really know the truth from personal experience. It doesn't bother them that you know they are lying. They will just say the lie again - and you might even believe them, because they say it with such conviction.

They are convincing because after a split-second when they privately decide that some lie will serve their purpose, they actually believe it themselves. They have other markers, too: they are usually male, they are always intelligent, they are almost always charming, and they generally get through several spouses and many children in a lifetime. They are, in a word, sociopaths.

Which takes me back to an interview I did with a sociologist in an American university many years ago. We had finished up, and I casually asked if he knew of any evolutionary circumstances that were changing human behaviour now. He paused for a moment, then said that he thought the sociopaths were multiplying. So, I unpacked my gear and resumed the interview. He began with the obvious statement that sociopathy is usually if not always a genetic property. Most sociopaths are born, not made. And he speculated on how they could have escaped being weeded out by natural selection back in the hunter-gatherer days, because those were small groups of people - thirty or forty adults - where everybody knew everybody else.

His answer was that small groups are not very vulnerable to a sociopath. Everybody has his number before he reaches reproductive age, so he can't be a super-spawner. Everybody checks his lies with everybody else, so he doesn't get away with much. And there are certain rare circumstances where it could be handy to have a sociopath around.

All went well until human beings started living in societies thousands or millions strong where the sociopaths become invisible. Nobody has their number, and there's an endless supply of strangers to deceive and exploit (and breed with). A mass society is a sociopath's garden of delights. Of course, their numbers are going up: my sociologist friend reckoned three per cent of males and rising. And of course, they are appearing in leadership positions because they can lie directly and convincingly to far more people. But here's the really interesting question: why are all these men now on their way out of power or already gone? That may be part of their sociopathy too, because they all leave trails of human wreckage behind them: cheated partners, abandoned lovers, betrayed followers. They can't help it; it's who they are.

So the good news may be that genuine sociopaths get found out in the end. The bad news, however, is that there's lots more of them out there, and they're breeding like flies.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)

# Rationalising the nation's direct taxes



UTTAM GUPTA

## The Government should rationalise direct taxes to address anomalies between PIT and corporate tax at one level and capital gains tax at another

Ever since the commencement of its second term, Modi Government has showered benevolence on the corporate sector by giving relief in income tax but when it comes to personal income tax (PIT), it has not matched the expectations.

On September 20, 2019, Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman had announced steep reduction in the rate of corporate tax for "new entities" incorporated from October 1, 2019 in the manufacturing sector and start production by March 31, 2023 from the existing 25 per cent to 15 per cent. Such companies won't have to pay minimum alternate tax (MAT).

Furthermore, the tax rate on existing companies was reduced from 30 per cent to 22 per cent sans exemptions and deductions. These firms are also exempt from MAT. The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with annual turnover of less than ₹400 crore were already enjoying a preferential tax rate of 25 per cent against 30 per cent payable by large firms. Following the cut to 22 per cent (albeit for all 'existing' firms), the preferential treatment for SMEs is gone.

Meanwhile, the companies were given a choice to either continue with the old regime viz. tax at 30 per cent with tax breaks or go for the new one. For those deciding to continue, MAT was reduced from extant 18.5 to 15 per cent.

In the Budget for 2020-21, Sitharaman extended the benefit of 15 per cent rate to "new" power companies also. Besides, "cooperatives" were made eligible for the 22 per cent rate sans exemptions and deductions. The FM also abolished dividend distribution tax or DDT. From April 1, 2020, dividend is taxed in the hands of shareholders.

In the 2022-23 budget, the government has extended the eligibility of 15 per cent corporate tax to new (albeit manufacturing) entities which get incorporated before March 31, 2024 - against the existing threshold of March 31, 2023. It has reduced the surcharge on profits of cooperatives from existing 12 per cent to 7 per cent besides reducing MAT from existing 18.5 per cent to 15 per cent.

Coming to PIT, prior to 2020-21, a person having an income of ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 per annum was required to pay tax of five per cent, those earning more than ₹5,00,000 but less than ₹10,00,000 paid 20 per cent tax whereas, someone having an income higher than ₹10,00,000 paid 30 per cent. With these tax rates, individuals enjoyed a plethora of exemptions and deductions.

The 2020-21 budget, even while retaining 5 per cent tax for annual income in the ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 range, on income higher than ₹5,00,000, it levied: 10 per cent for ₹5,00,001-₹7,50,000; 15 per cent for ₹7,50,001-₹10,00,000; 20 per cent for ₹10,00,001-₹12,50,000; 25 per cent for ₹12,50,001-₹15,00,000. For



MODI ALSO NEEDS TO LOOK INTO THE EXTANT REGIME FOR CAPITAL GAINS TAX. THE TAX RATE VARIES DEPENDING ON THE CATEGORY OF THE UNDERLYING ASSET AND THE HOLDING PERIOD. FOR INSTANCE, EQUITY AND EQUITY MUTUAL FUNDS ATTRACT SHORT-TERM CAPITAL GAINS TAX OF 15 PER CENT AND LONG-TERM CAPITAL GAINS TAX OF 10 PER CENT

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

income above ₹15,00,000, the 30 per cent tax continues.

As in case of corporate tax, individuals were given the choice to go either for the new regime sans exemptions/deductions or continue with the old regime with exemptions/deductions. The following two budgets viz. 2021-22 and 2022-23 have left the PIT unchanged.

On the face of it, with tax rates under different slabs being lower, it would appear the new PIT regime is better. But, considering that it comes without exemptions/deductions, the gain is illusory. For instance, under the old regime, a person having an annual income of ₹15,00,000 and availing tax breaks of ₹3,75,000 (Section 80C:1,50,000; Section 80D: 25,000; Section 24: 2,00,000), pays ₹1,56,000 as tax.

Against this, under the new regime, he will have to pay ₹1,95,000 as the benefit of lower rates is more than offset by withdrawal of exemptions and deductions. So, the 2020-21 budgetary changes have not made individuals any better. At the same time, after the steep cut in corporate tax rate in September, 2019, the extant PIT rates don't entice them.

For annual income greater than ₹15,00,000, the PIT at 30 per cent is double than the corporate tax rate at 15 per cent for a new manufacturing enterprise (when compared to the tax paid by an existing firm or 22 per cent also, the former is much higher). Even in respect of individuals with annual income in the ₹10,00,000-₹15,00,000 range, the applicable

tax rates, i.e., 20-25 per cent are higher than the corporate tax.

The individuals could gain from abolition of DDT. This is because on their dividend income, against 20 per cent paid prior to 2020-21, levy of tax on such income in their hands will entail payment at a lower rate for instance, 10 per cent for those earning in ₹500,001-₹750,000 range. However, this is of little use as these earners hardly have any surplus to invest in shares.

Clearly, Modi - government has done much less for PIT payers. While, less tax on profits of firms is important for inducing them to increase investment, reducing PIT is no less crucial. In fact, in the contemporary context, when growth is hamstrung more by the demand constraint, the latter can be much more rewarding.

The FM should consider putting more money in the pockets of individuals by giving extra relief in PIT. This may be done by changing the tax structure to: 7.5 per cent tax on income in ₹5,00,001-₹10,00,000; 10 per cent in the ₹10,00,000 - ₹15,00,000; 15 per cent in ₹15,00,000-₹20,00,000 and 20 per cent on above ₹20,00,000 (there will not be any tax breaks).

Under this package, a person earning ₹15,00,000 will pay ₹1,04,000 as tax which is significantly lower than the payout of ₹1,56,000 under the old regime. Apart from giving a massive boost to the demand, this will also propel assesses shift en masse to the new dispensation.

On the corporate front, the legacy of exemptions/deductions

needs to be completely erased. According to the revenue secretary, Tarun Bajaj, already 65 per cent of the existing companies have switched over to the new regime of 22 per cent sans exemptions/deductions. Hopefully, rest of the firms will also shift within an accelerated time frame.

Modi also needs to look into the extant regime for capital gains tax. The tax rate varies depending on the category of the underlying asset and the holding period. For instance, equity and equity mutual funds attract short-term capital gains tax (STCG) of 15 per cent and long-term capital gains tax (LTCG) of 10 per cent. STCG on most bond investments is at the tax slab the investor comes under. LTCG is either 10 or 20 per cent, depending on whether it is a listed or unlisted bond or a debt mutual fund. For real state, LTCG is at 20 per cent.

Such a highly differentiated tax structure is prone to misuse, evasion and protracted litigation. Irrespective of the asset an individual deals in and the holding period, the capital gains arising there from are addition to his income in the relevant year. Logically therefore, tax should be levied at the rate applicable to the slab his total income (all sources put together) falls in.

To conclude, the government should rationalize the direct taxes to address anomalies between PIT and corporate tax at one level and capital gains tax at another. Moreover, the tax rates should be low but free from exemptions/deductions.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIS ELECTION IS NOT FOR THE NEXT ELECTION, BUT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.  
—PUNJAB CONGRESS CHIEF NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU



THE SAD-BSP ALLIANCE WILL MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP, WINNING 80-PLUS SEATS.  
—SAD PRESIDENT SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL

# Clear front-of-pack labels to safeguard health

## Simple warnings on high levels of fat, salt and sugar in packaged foods can be a lifesaving solution

Even as India copes with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that has already strained our health system, with hospitals diverting resources and capacities to treat the infection, the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are becoming an emergency we cannot afford to ignore. Results of the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) should come as an eye-opener for policymakers as well as consumers.

The Global Nutrition Report, 2021 says that around 12 million people died prematurely in 2018 due to risks linked to an imbalanced and unhealthy diet. These included NCDs like CVD (heart attack, stroke etc), cancer and diabetes. Diabetes remains one of the biggest and fastest-growing killers today. In India, the num-



NAVAL K VIKRAM

(The writer is a diabetologist and professor, department of medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

ber of people with diabetes caused by obesity is expected to rise from 77 million in 2019 to 101 million in 2030.

Not just children, obesity among women and men has also increased. The percentage of overweight women went up from 20.6 per cent to 24 per cent, while in men the number increased from 18.9 per cent to 22.9 per cent, according to the NFHS-5.

Obesity and NCDs are on the rise not only in metros or urban settings but also in rural areas where the food industry has made inroads through their well-oiled marketing strategy offering high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) laden packaged food. This has left consumers and nation to suffer—both on the health and economy fronts. According to the World Health



Organisation (WHO), around 58 Lakh Indians die every year due to preventive NCDs.

Covid-induced restrictions like 'work from home', lockdowns, social distancing, and travel restrictions to arrest the spread of infection in many countries including India have just added to the health woes. Demand for ready-to-make, easily available packaged food has increased, while physical activity has comparatively

slowed down for many.

However, what is a matter of concern is that these unhealthy options are put before the consumer when there are so many healthy choices like fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious food are available.

With the virus likely to stay here - since it is more than two years in existence since 2019 - it gives a second chance to the Government as a policymaker, community as well as a responsible individual to introspect what food is being offered on the platter to cut down the NCDs.

Three important and increasingly common policy strategies recommended by the WHO are: front-of-package labels (FOPL) on unhealthy foods and beverages, restrictions on marketing these foods to

children, and restricting the sales of these products in schools.

Clearly, consumers need to be provided with clear information about the nutrition profile of the packaged food products and drinks while nudging the industry to reformulate their products for the better health of the people.

This could be possible by making mandatory 'easy to understand' warning labels on packaged food and beverages that would help consumers in making healthier choices and help curtail deaths from NCDs as has been in the case with the cigarettes which have clear warning symbols.

In fact, as per the global health body, the FOPL works best when it is made mandatory and applies to all packaged

products, the label is interpretative, simplistic and readily visible, guided by a strong nutrition profile model. The WHO says consumption has come down after warning labels were made compulsory.

Case in point is Chile. It has mandated "High-in" warning labels - considered the golden standard FOPL, restricted sale marketing to children, and banned in-school sales of packaged foods and beverages having HFSS-black octagon(s) with the words high-in sugar, sodium, saturated fat, and/or calories, whichever applies.

By making FOPL mandatory, Chile has already started reaping benefits with more of its citizens saying no to HFSS products.

Another area where we as a responsible society and govern-

ment as a concerned policymaker should intervene is to scan what is being dished out to our children on the TV screen. According to various reports, the fast food industry is increasingly eyeing children as their potential future consumers - with kids seeing ads when they're as young as two years old. Children now see about 33% more fast food TV ads than they did just six to seven years ago, while preschoolers see 21 per cent more, which is alarming.

Measures such as mandatory FOPL and marketing restrictions are a few solutions that can address diet-related disease epidemics. World over countries are prioritising such actions. India is also in the process of taking a step in this direction to build a nutrition secure and healthier future.

# Nirmala asks banks to be more customer-friendly

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said banks need to focus more on being customer-friendly so that the process of availing credit becomes more hassle-free for borrowers.

However, the minister made it clear that banks do not have to be lenient on credit underwriting standards by taking any adverse risks on a proposal.

At a meeting between industry representatives and the finance minister, a startup founder in the baking business suggested for credit to be available hassle-free, to which largest lender SBI's Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said a startup's worries are more on the equity side and assured full support in lending if sufficient equity is on the table.

Later, he also made a mention of the government's Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).

Stressing that the person asking the question is a woman operating an innovative enterprise, Sitharaman had a few suggestions for the banking



community and also spoke out against their attitude.

"Initially, Mr Khara gave a very bland answer. And then after being prompted somewhat, he went into talking about a scheme which has a lot of government support, the CGTMSE," she said.

"Banks will have to be a lot more customer friendly. Not to the extent of taking adverse risks which you don't need to take, but you need to be a lot more friendly to customers," the minister said.

Khara said the focus is on

increasing the reliance on end-to-end digitalisation of the process, which will ensure a hassle-free experience.

He said in the next two months, the bank will go fully digital for lending. Also, provided there is credible cashflow visibility available to a bank, the credit growth to small businesses can touch that of personal loans over time.

Tarun Bajaj, the revenue secretary who has worked in the Department of Financial Services as well, said banks need to be cognisant of the

needs to lend more and support the economic growth. He added that the balance sheet of corporates is in better shape now. Khara said it is a normal perception that banks do not sanction loans, but pointed to very high levels of underutilisation of sanctioned working capital limits, which generally point to slowing demand in an economy. He said even after a 9 percentage points improvement in a quarter, the under-utilisation of working capital is as high as 52 per cent for the country's largest lender.

## Capri Global Capital to enter gold loan business in H1 FY23

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Non-banking financial company (NBFC) Capri Global Capital Ltd (CGCL) on Monday said it is planning to enter the gold loan business in the first half of the financial year 2022-23.

The lender aims to build a gold loan book size of Rs 8,000 crore and expand its network with 1,500 branch locations over the next five years, according to a statement.

Currently, it operates in two major verticals - secured MSME loans and affordable housing finance. It also provides construction finance to affordable housing projects and distributes auto loan products of some banks.

"We see immense scope in the gold loan market as financial distress due to the pandemic has increased demand for credit across low-to-medium income households."

Due to the emotional value associated with gold, people pledge their gold as collateral and secure a short-term loan rather than selling it," CGCL Managing Director Rajesh Sharma said.

## 'Leveraging tech to become US\$ 5 trn economy welcome'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leveraging digital channels to strengthen agriculture, healthcare and education to drive India towards a USD 5 trillion economy is a welcome step by the government, HUL Chairman and Managing Director Sanjiv Mehta said on Monday while highlighting faster technology adoption post pandemic.

While referring to the recent Union Budget, Mehta said ubiquity of technology and the need for mainstreaming it for the greater good was "amply evident" in the speech of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"Leveraging digital channels and using technology to strengthen agriculture, healthcare and education which are the foundational pillars driving India towards its USD 5 trillion ambition are indeed welcome," said Mehta while virtually addressing the AIMA foundation day.

Though technology and digital proliferation were there even before the pandemic, the speed at which they have become integral to our very existence is phenomenal, he added.

"At HUL too, technology is a key enabler as articulated in



the 'Reimagine HUL' strategy. It is a vision of how we want to leverage data, harness latest technologies and emerging business models, to redefine how HUL engages with consumers, customers, and the way we operate," said Mehta.

HUL is now building an 'Intelligent Enterprise', moving away from the traditional linear value chain to a non-linear ecosystem by building distinctive capabilities across the organisation with an objective to stay abreast of the changing needs but also create structural capabilities that provide superior value to consumers.

"The HUL of the future will be a web of intelligent ecosystems - the consumer ecosystem, customer ecosystem, operations ecosystem with data, technology, and

analytics at the core," he said adding, "We are in the midst of a paradigm shift where the intelligence of machines will complement human ingenuity to do good, do better and smarter."

While pandemics and man-made disasters cause enormous damage, they are also catalysts for change, Mehta said adding climate change and technology are two areas where we need to take charge to be able to steer decisively into the future.

Mehta said a recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has clearly called out that climate change needs to be halted with immediate effect.

"Decisive steps are already being taken on this front. Several governments including India have outlined bold action plans at COP26. India, as we all know, has set itself an ambitious target of raising its non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030," he said.

India's target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070 will pave the path towards a sustainable future.

Anglo-Dutch FMCG major Unilever, the parent of HUL, has also made sustainability a core part, he added.

## MONEY MATTERS

### SAT dismisses Sebi order against HDFC Bank



The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has quashed a Sebi order against HDFC Bank, whereby the regulator had imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on the lender in a case pertaining to invoking securities pledged by stockbroker BRH Wealth Creators. In addition, the regulator had directed to transfer Rs 158.68 crore along with seven per cent interest per annum into an escrow account till the issue of settlement of clients' securities is reconciled. These directions were issued by Sebi in January 2021 as HDFC Bank invoked securities pledged by BRH Wealth Creators in violation of the regulator's interim order passed in October 2019. Following the Sebi's order, HDFC Bank moved to SAT. In its order on Friday, SAT said the bank was justified in invoking the pledge made by the broker BRH. While invoking the pledge the bank did not violate any direction contained in Sebi's interim order. The appellant (HDFC Bank) could invoke the pledge under Depositories Act and is not required to approach any forum or Court of law for invocation of the pledge. The assets of the broker do not include pledge of the shares created by the sub-broker," SAT said. The tribunal noted that the pledge was created by the broker BRH under the Depositories Act in favour of HDFC Bank. According to SAT, once a pledge is validly created by the broker in favour of the appellant (HDFC Bank) and the appellant is recorded as the beneficial owner in the records maintained by the depository, the beneficial owner becomes the registered owner.

### Businesses need to adapt to new models



Organisations need to adapt to new models and unconventional thinking going ahead as a volatile and uncertain environment has undermined the effectiveness of traditional ways of operating businesses, Hero MotoCorp Chairman and CEO Pawan Munjal said on Monday. Munjal, who is the recipient of this year's AIMA JRD Tata Corporate Leadership Award, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant unprecedented challenges and uncertainties in the supply chain call for sea changes in operating procedures. "In the recent past, the incredibly volatile and uncertain environment has undermined the effectiveness of long term forecasting and traditional strategic planning. The change in the world ecosystem has been disruptive, pushing people, organisations and economies to the brink. Thus, achieving goals now requires a sea change in our models of operations," Munjal stated in his keynote address. The veteran industry leader noted the ability to thrive in uncertain times requires unconventional thinking and calculated risks, including delivering difficult or unpopular decisions. "In the current scenario, where uncertainty characterizes ties, economic and social structures, it is a race for organisations to move away from the traditional approaches of strategy and adopt evolved models," Munjal said. He noted that global political unease, commodity and supply chain disruptions, health concerns and innovations were adding to all the global uncertainty.

### Gold prices decline Rs 212; silver down by Rs 480



Gold prices on Monday declined by Rs 212 to Rs 49,827 per 10 gram in the national capital, in line with selling in the overseas markets, along with a rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 50,039 per 10 gram in the previous trade. Silver tumbled by Rs 480 to Rs 63,329 per kg, compared with the previous close of Rs 63,809. The rupee in the early trade on Monday spurred by 22 paise to 74.44 a dollar. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Spot gold prices for 24 carat gold in Delhi fell Rs 212 in line with selling at COMEX gold prices along with rupee appreciation." In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,893 an ounce while silver was also marginally down at USD 23.78 an ounce. Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading marginally down near USD 1,893 per ounce on Monday," Patel said.

## Forex-starved Sri Lanka runs out of cash to buy fuel

PNS ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan government on Monday admitted that it has run out of cash to buy fuel as pumps in most filling stations across the country have run dry, exacerbating the deepening foreign-exchange crisis that has crippled the island nation's economy.

So dire is Sri Lanka's current economic situation that it does not even have adequate US dollars to pay for two shipments of fuel.

"Two shipments of fuel have arrived today, but we are unable to pay for it," Sri Lanka's Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila said on Monday.

Last week, state-owned refinery Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) said it was out of money to procure supplies from abroad.

The CPC suffered losses to the tune of USD 415 million in 2021 due to the sale of diesel at prices fixed by the government.



"I had warned about the impending fuel shortages due to the dollar crisis twice in January and once earlier this month," Gammanpila said.

Sri Lanka's worsening foreign-exchange shortage has seriously impacted the energy sector, which largely depends on imports for fuel.

The fuel shortage has led to long queues at understocked pumps across the country.

Gammanpila reckoned that

the only way out of this mess is by hiking the retail prices of fuel. The minister also urged the government to reduce the customs duty on fuel imports in order to pass the benefits to the public. Earlier this month, Sri Lanka bought 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel and petrol from India's oil major Indian Oil Corporation to meet the urgent energy requirements in the economic crisis worsened by depleted foreign reserves.

## Payout package for land losers in Deocha coal project

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said the government has modified the compensation for land losers of Deocha Pachami coal mining project and that there will be no forced acquisition of land for it. The Rs 35,000 crore coal project in Birbhoom district is the country's largest and the world's second largest one.

Banerjee said after a cabinet meeting that the state government wants to acquire land for the mining project, which will create one lakh jobs. "The government will develop this project and no land will be given to the private sector. We have modified the compensation in the cabinet meeting so that people are benefitted."

"Despite this, if anyone does not want to give land we will not force and will develop the project excluding that portion," she said.

The chief minister said that compensation and support is



being offered to even those who live in the area identified for the coal block and do not have any legal right either on any land or building there.

"Some illegal mine owners in the area are misguiding the locals, but the offer is excellent and I don't think anyone will reject it. The project will bring immense economic boost to the state by offering low cost power for another 100 years," Banerjee, who had supported the anti-land acquisition movements at Singur and Nandigram, said.

## Sensex, Nifty suffer 4th straight loss in line with weak global cues

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity gauges Sensex and Nifty logged their fourth straight session of fall on Monday as participants remained cautious over lingering geopolitical tensions in eastern Europe.

Tracking deep losses on Asian bourses, the BSE Sensex dived around 700 points in the opening session but staged a recovery to briefly trade in the positive zone as market jitters were calmed by hopes of talks between the US and Russia over the Ukraine crisis.

The Sensex finally ended 149.38 points or 0.26 per cent lower to settle at 57,683.59, while the broader NSE Nifty slipped 69.65 points or 0.40 per cent to 17,206.65.

Of the Sensex constituents, 21 shares ended in the red, with Sun Pharma, TCS and ITC emerging as top laggards.

## Domestic air traffic to cross pre-COVID levels in next 2 months: Scindia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of daily air passengers is expected to cross pre-COVID levels in the next two months, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Monday and also urged states to reduce tax on jet fuel to boost the country's aviation sector.

"During the pre-COVID times, domestic airlines carried around 4 lakh passengers per day and the number began climbing up after second wave but again declined after the emergence of Omicron infections late last year."

Scindia said capacity and fare caps were put in place to make sure that there was a "little bit of an insulated environment in which the industry can

function to ensure that all our players survive and all of them get some decent market share and some levels of revenue". Airlines were allowed to operate at full capacity from October 18, 2021.

"In November, December, we started hitting numbers of 3.8 to 3.9 lakh passengers per day. We were almost back to pre-COVID levels... with Omicron, number of travellers tanked... we fell to 1.6 lakh per day. So we had a contraction of about 65-70 per cent," the minister said.

Speaking at an event organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA), Scindia said that on Sunday, the traffic was at 3.5 lakh.

## Rupee extends gains for 5th day, rises by 11 paise as dollar, crude

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the fifth straight day, the rupee extended gains by 11 paise to close at 74.55 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday on the back of a weak dollar and softer crude oil prices amid hopes of a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The local unit opened strong at 74.51 to a dollar and later spurred to the day's high of 74.35 as crude oil traded below USD 95 per barrel. The rupee later gave up some of the gains due to losses in the domestic equity markets and forex outflows, before finally finishing at 74.55.

## SEA asks edible oil players to reduce minimum retail price

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stating that domestic edible oil prices are showing no sign of easing in view of global developments, industry body SEA on Monday appealed to its members to reduce minimum retail price (MRP) of cooking oils by Rs 3-5 per kg with immediate effect in order to give relief to consumers.

This is the second time the industry body is requesting its members to cut MRP. Last time, it had asked its members to reduce MRP on edible oils by Rs 3-5/kg around Diwali in November 2021.

India, which meets more than 60 per cent of its edible oil demand through imports, has taken several steps like reducing import duty on palm oils,



imposing stock limits in the last few months, to keep domestic retail prices under check. Despite these proactive efforts of the government, all-India average retail prices continue to rule higher than the year-ago periods. "These prices are

showing no immediate signs of moderating and some exporting countries like Indonesia have also started regulating exports of palm oil by way of licensing," the Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) said in a statement.

## Tata Power, RWE tie up to develop offshore wind projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power on Monday said it has collaborated with Germany-based RWE Renewable GmbH to explore potential for a joint development of offshore wind projects in India.

A corresponding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited, a 100 per cent subsidiary of Tata Power, which is one of India's largest integrated power companies, and RWE Renewables GmbH, one of the world's leaders in offshore wind, a Tata Power statement has said.

India is an unexplored and highly attractive market to



develop opportunities for offshore wind as it has a large coastline of about 7,600 kilometres. The MoU between Tata

Power Renewable Energy and RWE becomes significant in the light of the Government of India's announcement of achieving 30 gigawatts (GW) of

offshore wind installations by 2030 to meet the country's growing power demands, it added. RWE and Tata Power

Renewable Energy possess complementary strengths and will enable the establishment of a competitive offshore wind market in India.

Praveer Sinha, CEO and Managing Director of Tata Power, said in the statement, "RWE is our ideal partner to support Tata Power's plans to enhance and grow offshore wind business based on its global expertise in running and operating offshore wind projects. In view of the Indian Government's heightened focus on offshore wind farms to address the country's expanding electricity demands, the collaboration becomes even more significant." Sven Utermohlen, CEO Wind Offshore of RWE Renewables, explains in the statement: "India

has excellent wind resources, which can help to meet the country's increasing energy demands. If clear regulations and an effective tender scheme are in place, we expect India's offshore wind industry will gain a real momentum. RWE wants to be part of this development." Utermohlen added: "With Tata Power we have an outstanding and experienced partner at our side which is deeply rooted locally and shares our ambition to drive the growth of offshore wind in India. Combined with RWE's 20 years' track record in developing, constructing and operating offshore wind projects, we are well placed to supply green energy from offshore wind as competitively as possible for the Indian society."





## Anil Kapoor, Harsh Vardhan Kapoor team up for Netflix's film *Thar*

Streaming giant Netflix on Monday announced its upcoming film *Thar*, starring Bollywood actors and real-life father-son duo Anil Kapoor and Harsh Vardhan Kapoor.

The revenge noir thriller marks the directorial debut of Raj Singh Chaudhary and is produced by Anil Kapoor Film Company (AKFC).

The noir comedy series *Deadloch* has gone into production in Australia. The series is set in the once sleepy seaside hamlet of Deadloch, for the story begins after a man's dead body is found on the beach.

After the incident, two female detectives are assigned to the case. With an over-eager junior by their side, they have to pool forces to solve the case while the town

Siddharth embarks on a journey to avenge his past. Will he succeed or does Pushkar have something else to offer him?" read the official logline.

*Thar* which is the second collaboration between Anil Kapoor and Harsh Vardhan after AK vs AK where the two were seen as themselves — also stars Fatima Sana Shaikh and Satish Kaushik.

Anil Kapoor said he is extremely proud of what the team has achieved with *Thar*.

The genre, a noir thriller set in Rajasthan that pays tribute to the genre of the classic Western is a first for Indian cinema and audiences. *Thar* is a playground where the dynamism of new blood meets the experience of industry stalwarts, both on and off screen, the 65-year-old actor-producer said in a statement.

He said the film will see the fresh pairing of Harsh Vardhan Kapoor and Fatima Sana Shaikh and off-screen director Chaudhary is creating magic with a

team of ambitious, risk-taking debutantes like director of photography Shreya Dev Dube and music composer Ajay Jayanthi.

*Thar* is a manifestation of this obsession and I'm thrilled to have a partner as supportive and collaborative as Netflix to take this story as far and wide as it can go. We, at AKFC Network, truly believe that audiences in India and across the globe will love and embrace the film for all its beauty, grit and thrill, he added.

Pratiksha Rao, Director, Films and Licensing, Netflix India, said, their aim is to bring diverse and entertaining films to the

## James Gunn, Jennifer Holland are engaged

Filmmaker James Gunn is engaged to his longtime partner and actor Jennifer Holland.

The *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise director posted a photo on Instagram on Sunday of Holland sipping from a mug while showing off a diamond ring on her left ring finger.

The *Hollywood Reporter* has confirmed that the post is an engagement announcement. The couple have been together

since 2015. Earlier in the day, Holland also posted a photo of her and Gunn on Instagram with a rainbow behind the couple, with the caption: *Happiness*.

Gunn, 55, and Holland have also worked together on the director's version of *The Suicide Squad*, in which she played Emilia Harcourt, a role she recently reprised in his *Peacemaker* series opposite John Cena.

The 34-year-old actor has also starred in TV series such as *Sun Records* and *American Horror Story*.

Gunn was previously married to *The Office* star Jenna Fischer. They split in 2007 after six years of marriage.



## Sword Art Online Progressive: Aria of a Starless Night to release in India on Feb 25

Japanese animation film *Sword Art Online the Movie — Progressive-Aria of a Starless Night* is all set to hit the Indian theatres on February 25.

PVR Pictures, as part of their exclusive deal with ODEX, the leading Japanese animation film distributor in South East Asia, is releasing the film in India.

Telling the tale of Kirito and his exploits inside the next-generation VRMMORPG, *Sword Art Online*, the series has enjoyed immense popularity ever since the first volume was published in April 2009, and as of 2021 has sold more than 26 million copies worldwide.

Season 1 of the anime first aired in 2012. Along with the four seasons that have been broadcast up to today, the series has been adapted into various forms of media such as videogames and comics. The hit film *Sword Art Online the Movie — Ordinal Scale* premiered in 2017

and grossed over 2.5 billion yen. *Sword Art Online Progressive* is a reboot written by the original author himself, starting where it all began on Aincrad's first floor, then expanding and going even deeper into the storyline.

This is the story of a time

before Lightning Flash and the Black Swordsman were known by those names. Asuna Yuuki was a girl in the ninth grade who'd never had anything to do with online games when she accidentally put on the NerveGear that

fatal day. The game master speaks "This may be a game, but it's not something you play. *Game Over* means you die in the real world."

Hearing this, the players are sent into a state of confusion, and pandemonium reigns in the game. One of these players is Asuna. Despite not even knowing the rules of this new world, she sets out on her journey to the floating steel castle of Aincrad, its apex not yet visible.

As she continues to live on in this world where death is always a step away, Asuna has a fateful encounter followed by a parting. Despite being at the mercy of this strange reality, she fights on valiantly until someone appears before her: the solitary swordsman, Kirito.



## Australian series

### *Deadloch* begins production

is putting on its annual crafts, culture and cooking festival.

As per *Variety*, the eight-part show, conceived by comedy duo Kate McCartney and Kate McLennan, will be directed between February and May by Australian directors Ben Chessell, Gracie Otto and Beck Cole with Andy Walker taking the onus of production by Prime Video, Guesswork Television and OK Great Productions.

The show has been written by McCartney and McLennan along with Kim Wilson, Christian White, Anchuli Felicia King, Kristy Fisher and Sami. McCartney and McLennan will also serve as showrunner-producers. Fiona McConaghy is co-producer. McCartney and McLennan will also executive produce the show along with Kevin Whyte and Tanya Phegan. The series will star Kate Box, Madeleine Sami, Alicia Gardiner, Nina



## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



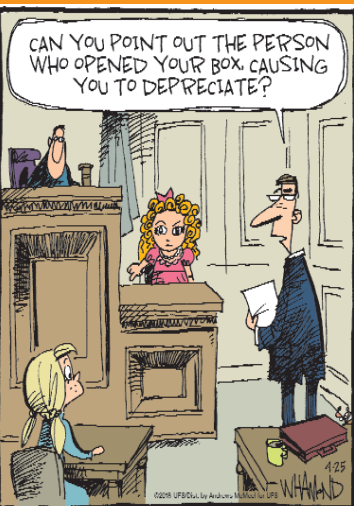
### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



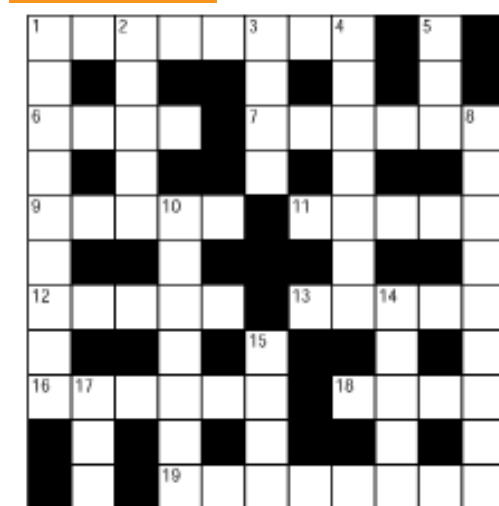
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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**Yesterday's solution**

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| 1 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
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**Rules**

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

### ACROSS

- Gigantic
- The organs of sight
- Cardboard box
- Move on hands and knees
- Hurt by a bee
- Three times twenty
- Yell
- Gave out a long deep breath to show sadness or happiness
- A sheet-like garment worn in ancient Rome
- Think differently to someone else

### DOWN

- Do these to strengthen your muscles and keep fit
- A sung musical drama
- One time
- Make longer by pulling
- A place to see animals
- A frightening dream
- Observed
- A small
- Counts up
- Unwell



## 2022's bridal couture is all about being an extremist!



weaving touch her or leave her alone since she was a child. She likes to run ahead of time, and the current moment suggested she bring in digital technology into her business. She has been making some fantastic garments as an ode to the varied cultures that we prosper from gracefully in the bridal segment and more. In fact, the dresses of our favourite stars are a result of the skill-sets of designers like her. While talking to her, we found out, "For me, designing is more of an art form. The garment is my canvas and its features serve as a purpose in the storytelling of my brides to me. All my costumes are no less than a muse to me. I stand for disclosing the truth about my designs, the real inspiring stories. On this journey, I have always conceptualised a woman even better than who Saroj is, and that's who I want to be in reality."

Does duplicacy ever bother her as a renowned fashion designer? She says, "Duplicate designs don't bother me at all — art is a great way to spread my creative ideas. If my idea can change someone's lifestyle, there's nothing more overwhelming than that. My individuality and eagerness to try new things set me apart from the crowd. We must forever be remembered for how we pushed boundaries and influenced how we all dress."

It's her out-of-the-box creations that stand out in bridal couture as a master of taste. Nowadays, photo-shoots are a vital factor in oozing the glam quotient online and are a great way to publicise your garments! Who was that actor who swept the designer off her feet with the way she/he exhibited her designs for the masses to gauge? She shares, "It was none other than Genelia D'Souza. You know what? Imagery has gained incredible social and commercial weight in all realms of our lives. The process is more like imagining, combining, planning, and then executing. It's

we follow a few principles. Before taking up any task, it is necessary to understand its scope and objective, as I believe that once the scope is clearly understood, including how stakeholders of this task are getting benefitted, then the task of any project becomes relatively easier to execute. The success of any project is heavily dependent on the team in charge."

He also believes that once a team of people who believe in the project and its goals is in place, then success is almost guaranteed. Before starting any project, it is essential to speak with each team member about the project's intent so that the team is aligned with the project goals

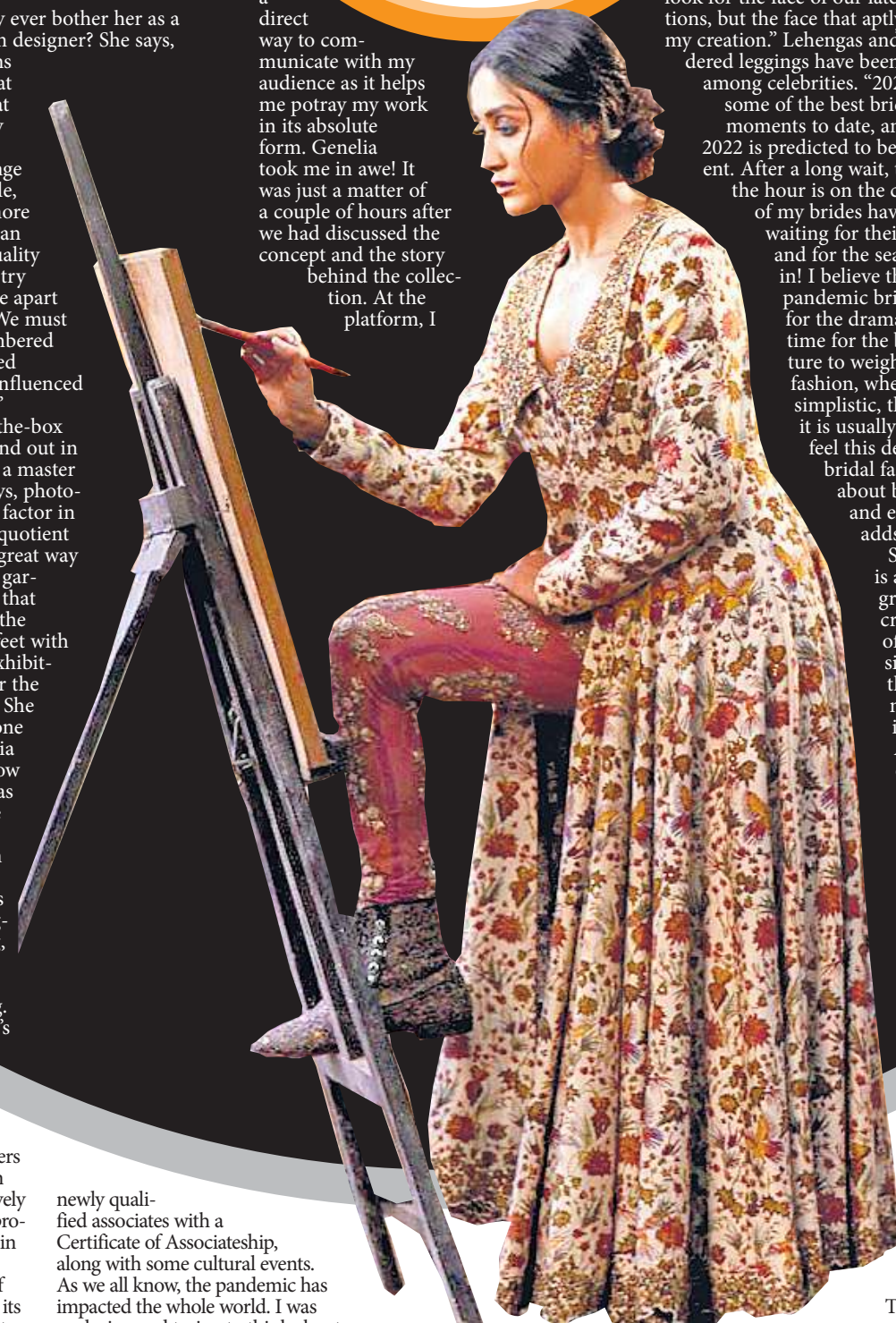
### The know-hows of an actuarial community

and each team member is very clear about his or her role and responsibilities. Also, drawing a feasible project plan with clear timelines and proper documentation is very integral to the overall success of any project. He himself tries to monitor the project plan at specific intervals so that any issues arising are addressed at the earliest possible stage. He would summarise that the key to the success of any project is the clarity of the project or task with proper team collaboration. What inspired him to go on with the conclave idea as such? He shares, "It's already an established annual signature event of the Global Conference of Actuaries conducted every year with several national and international speakers presenting their thoughts. Also, during this event, the institute facilitates newly qualified actuaries with a Certificate of Fellowship and

newly qualified associates with a Certificate of Associateship, along with some cultural events. As we all know, the pandemic has impacted the whole world. I was exploring and trying to think about how we can continue to conduct our regular actuarial examination and entrance examination, ACET, for our students without impacting the quality of the

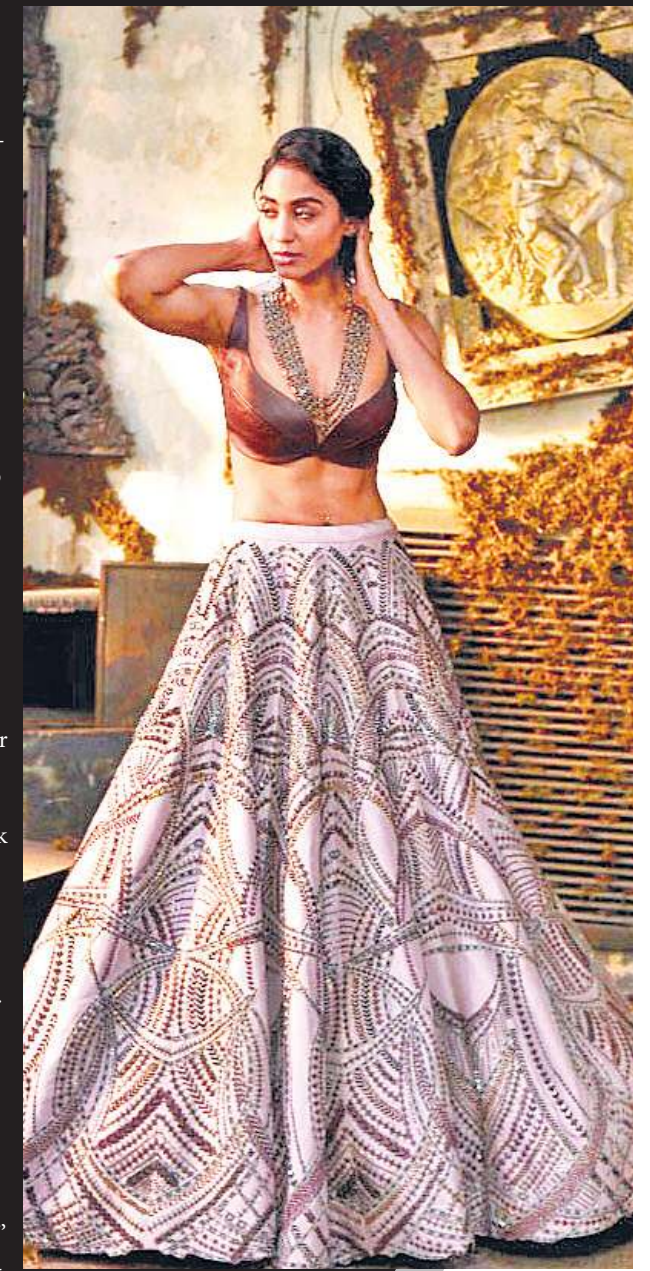


a direct way to communicate with my audience as it helps me portray my work in its absolute form. Genelia took me in awe! It was just a matter of a couple of hours after we had discussed the concept and the story behind the collection. At the platform, I



could see her embracing herself as the protagonist, and presenting it with her grace. The way she presented it was just breathtaking." Ushering a little bit of romanticism into her threads, she says, "Isn't romanticism all about imagination and emotion? I tend to unfold the story of life by making the ideal attire for the bride on her D-Day. It should bring in the nostalgia. It should make her feel the butterflies in her stomach and should bring lots of love and harmony. And, if it's a celebrity, a celeb connection does help attract fans because they are also the true artists serving in cinema for so long. As a designer, we do look for the face of our latest collections, but the face that aptly justifies my creation." Lehengas and embroidered leggings have been popular among celebrities. "2021 gave us some of the best bridal fashion moments to date, and luckily, 2022 is predicted to be no different. After a long wait, the rush for the hour is on the clock. Lots of my brides have been waiting for their big day and for the season to kick in! I believe that post-pandemic brides are up for the drama, and it's time for the bridal couture to weigh in. In fashion, when an era is simplistic, the era after it is usually extreme. I feel this decade of bridal fashion is about being bold and extremist," adds she.

Saroj Jalan is a home-grown brand, created out of sheer passion back in the day! The journey has been impeccable. Achieving the day for the bride with the utmost proficiency is what Saroj Jalan aims for. The idea is to bring the dreams of the bride to her attire. She designs the lehenga so



that the muse can cherish and keep it in her wardrobe for years. She wants to make her creations nothing less than a piece of jewellery!

ourable Prime Minister of India and from the honourable Union Cabinet Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs of India — this is the first time in the history of the institute."

Thinking about engaging generation Z, he felt that they found students, especially from the smaller towns and rural areas, who were not aware of the actuarial profession and the number of opportunities it generated for them. They debated how we could help them. In line with the National Education Policy 2020, to encourage and support the students, they have also announced that they will conduct an Olympiad in Actuarial Science for Indian Students (OASIS). Tasks like naming the conclave and creating a logo are obvious, but what about the less-heralded, equally important steps? He says, "The onset of the pandemic was one of the biggest challenges. It was clear that we could no longer conduct offline examinations. I considered these challenges opportunities to better the lives of others. The opportunity to conduct the actuarial examination digitally for the first time to help the students write their examinations without any travel to the examination centre during this COVID pandemic paves the way for the future. For the first time, an electronic ballot was used to fill a casual vacancy on the council. Hosting a significant event like GCA in the pandemic was also very challenging, but we overcame that by swiftly shifting to VAC." With his children growing, he started to understand generation Z more closely. And he felt that at the IAI they needed to upgrade their approach to engage them. Accordingly, he has designed the IAI 2.0 strategy to engage Generation Z better!



The conclave received special messages from the hon-

### Beat sleep apnea

Recently, singer-musician Bappi Lahiri passed away at the age of 69 due to Obstructive Sleep Apnea! Soon after that, there was a barrage of Google searches on "what's sleep apnea?" People could figure out that it's a very common phenomenon, given an unhealthy lifestyle. For those who want to know what in reality paves the way for a disorder like this, there is the medical insight of Dr. Chandramohan, who is a senior ENT surgeon at Kamineni Hospitals, in the context of the sudden death of Bappi Lahiri. He says, "OSA is a global disease with a rising incidence associated with comorbidities. Obesity is strongly linked to OSA, and because of increased fat deposition in the throat, upper airway narrowing and decreased muscle activity occur in obese people, resulting in multiple hypoxic and apneic episodes throughout sleep. The decreased oxy-

genation ultimately is a contributory factor to hypertension and cardiovascular diseases. In India, the incidence of OSA is about 3-17%, with males affected more than females in an age group of around 30-50 years. The most common risk factors include obesity, DM2, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, and depression. Luckily, we can treat OSA with surgical and non-surgical techniques, which include weight reduction, reducing BP and anxiety, and those who cannot be treated medically can be treated surgically. OSA is an important health crisis that demands multi-layered intervention that, if diagnosed early, can be treated, and can improve the overall health of the individual." The death of singer-composer Bappi Lahiri due to obstructive sleep apnea has put the spotlight on one of the most common sleep-related breathing disorders that affect nearly one billion people around the world, and we must call for some action.



Just about anyone can start a business. Once you fill out a few forms, get the necessary permits, offer a legitimate service, and advertise it a little bit, it's safe to say you are a business owner. But, there is this Virtual Actuarial Conclave 2022, an annual flagship event being hosted by the Institute of Actuaries of India, which is building a niche of its own! This event provides a platform which brings renowned global speakers from across the globe together and provides unmatched learning with networking opportunities to the members of the actuarial community. That's all this event is about. Several factors may affect the success of an event like this, but the president, Mr. Subhendu Bal, never let anything deter this opportunity. How does he continue to maintain this successful venture? That was our embarking question to him, and he goes on to say, "Being the President of the Institute of Actuaries of India (IAI), my role is to head the Council of IAI. The typical role is to establish policies, engage stakeholders, review the progress, and make decisions for the betterment of the profession. Over the past few years, the demand for actuarial resources has grown tremendously. The liberalisation of the insurance industry, growth in the economy, financial inclusion, and the inclination of Indian society to become financially secure have fuelled the demand for actuarial talent from insurance and pension companies in India. This institute was basically established under the Actuaries Act 2006. It works under the nodal Ministry of Finance. The actuarial profession was established in India more than 78 years ago when the Actuarial Society of India was established in the year 1944. Since then, the actuarial profession has come a long way." He continues, "At present, I work as a Chief Actuary and Chief Risk Officer at SBI Life Insurance Company Ltd. On Saturdays, when I have a day off from my regular job at SBI Life, I usually go to the IAI office. My entire day is generally pre-scheduled on this day with meetings to plan and review the IAI initiatives. I'll have to put in a few extra hours today to get things moving."

But, what's his success mantra after all? Because many people think that they will turn on their computers or open their doors and start making money, only to find that making money is much more difficult than they thought. He sheds light on this, "To be successful in any task or project based on strategy, believing in the team effort and subscribing to the goals and objectives of any task paves the way for success. Any project or task generally sees the light of the day provided

we follow a few principles. Before taking up any task, it is necessary to understand its scope and objective, as I believe that once the scope is clearly understood, including how stakeholders of this task are getting benefitted, then the task of any project becomes relatively easier to execute. The success of any project is heavily dependent on the team in charge."





# INDIA TOPS T20 RANKINGS

**PTI ■ DUBAI**  
 India claimed the top spot in the ICC men's T20 International Team Rankings on Monday, riding on their 3-0 series sweep over the West Indies at home.  
 Rohit Sharma's men eased to a 17-run victory over the West Indies in the third and final T20 of the series on Sunday in Kolkata

and in the process, clinched an emphatic 3-0 clean sweep.  
 The triumph helped India catapult England at the top of the T20 team rankings, with the side now matching the top rating of 269. India last attained the number one spot back in 2016, a reign that lasted a little over two months.  
 While England and India both have the same

rating across 39 international matches in the current rankings period (269), India has a total of 10,484 points, 10 more than England's 10,474.  
 According to a statement issued by the ICC, Pakistan (rating of 266), New Zealand (255) and South Africa (253) complete the top five list, while current world champions Australia (249) remain in

sixth after their 4-1 series victory over Sri Lanka.  
 West Indies (235) are placed seventh, followed by Afghanistan (232), Sri Lanka (231) and Bangladesh (231).  
 Prior to the recently concluded contests against the West Indies, India had whitewashed New Zealand 3-0 at home in November last year.  
 The men's T20 Players

Rankings are yet to be updated.  
 According to the last updated list, only two Indians -- KL Rahul and Virat Kohli -- feature in the top 10.  
 While Rahul is placed fourth in the T20 batting chart, Kohli is at the 10th spot. However, no Indian features in the top 10 bowlers and all-rounders' list.

# We're clear about WT20 team combo: Dravid

**PTI ■ KOLKATA**

Finding the perfect combination can be tricky and there is no set formula, but India head coach Rahul Dravid says he and skipper Rohit Sharma are pretty clear about the team for the T20 World Cup in Australia in less than eight months' time.

The former captain, who took over from Ravi Shastri after India's group stage exit in last year's T20 World Cup in UAE, will have his first big challenge in Australia. Dravid said he and Rohit understand what should be the team combination for the mega-event.

"I think we have got a fair idea between Rohit and myself and the selectors and the management," Dravid said after their 17-run win over the West Indies in the third T20I that ensured a 3-0 clean sweep here on Sunday. "I don't think there's a set formula to it. But we're pretty clear about the balance and the combination (for the T20 World Cup)...We are just structuring a little bit of the team around it and also balancing individual workloads as well."

"We have got a pretty fair idea of the kind of skills we're looking for in Australia, with the kind of guys who are in running. Not everything is set in stone but we want to give every-



one a fair chance to stake their claim for those spots," he added.  
 The T20I series against West Indies was India's first in a packed calendar in the build-up to the World Cup and they next take on Sri Lanka in an identical three-match rubber in four days' time.  
 In the absence of some Team India regulars like opener KL Rahul, and pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, India gave opportunities to youngsters such as Ishan Kishan, Rituraj Gaikwad and Avesh Khan to stake their claim in the World Cup-bound squad.  
 With Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant being given a 10-day bio-bubble rest, India also tried out Shreyas Iyer, while Kishan doubled up as the wicketkeeper in the third and final

T20I. Dravid said the whole process was about having the backups ready.  
 "In the times that we live in, it's never easy... I don't think there's a time-frame when you can actually say that okay, now this is the team you want to freeze on."  
 "You don't want to cast your net too wide. We don't also want to restrict ourselves to just 15 players. We want to give players opportunities, ensure that by the time we get to the World Cup, some of our guys have played at least 10-15-20 games," Dravid explained.  
 "It gives Rohit a chance to play them, bowl them in positions that he wants to, but he also has to be balanced with the fact that we need to have a few back-ups of people in case of an injury," he added.

# Dravid not hurt by Saha's comments

**PTI ■ KOLKATA**

India's head coach Rahul Dravid is not "hurt" by Wriddhiman Saha revealing the "difficult" conversation that the two had about his future as he firmly believes that the veteran keeper-batter "deserved the honesty and clarity" which was provided to him.  
 Saha, whose India career has come to a halt, recently told the media that Dravid asked him to consider retirement during a private conversation after the South Africa series last month.  
 Dravid said his intention behind talking to Saha was to ensure he has a clear picture of where he stands and he does not regret it.  
 "I'm actually not hurt at all. I have deep respect for Wriddhiman and his achievements and his contribution to Indian cricket. My conversation came from that place. I think he deserved honesty and clarity," Dravid replied at the end of the T20



series against the West Indies which India won 3-0 on Sunday.  
 The 37-year-old, who has played 40 Tests for India, was dropped from the squad ahead of the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka. He subsequently pulled out of the ongoing Ranji Trophy as well.

Dravid said he will continue having such conversations with players whether they like the discussion or not.  
 "It's about conversations I constantly have with players. I don't expect players to always agree with everything I say about them."

# WI should not feel disgraced: Pollard

**PTI ■ KOLKATA**

They might have been handed a 0-3 clean sweep in the T20I series but West Indies skipper Kieron Pollard said his team shouldn't feel disgraced as the scoreline is not an indication of the fight put up by them during the three-match rubber against India.  
 Suryakumar Yadav came up with an explosive 65 and was backed up by a spirited bowling effort by the seamers as West Indies fell short by 17 runs in their chase of 185 in the final T20I here on Sunday.  
 "Yes we lost 3-0 but the guys put their hands up and gave a good account of themselves. I don't think we should be disgraced by what has taken place," Pollard said in the post-match virtual media interaction here.  
 "We are not happy losing, let me put that on record. It's not like that at all. We are trying to win cricket games." West Indies had their best chance to level the series in the sec-



ond T20I with Rovman Powell and Nicholas Pooran slamming explosive fifties in a 100-run partnership.  
 But India fought back with

in International cricket between winning and losing, and the margins for error -- when you are bowling or batting," Pollard said.  
 "Executing in the backend is something we need to work on. From a bowling perspective, for the first 15 overs of this game, we had India right where we wanted them to be."  
 "Right through the series, it was just a matter of finishing off the games in the back-end. From a batting perspective, 157, 180 (178) and 170 (167) we did fairly decently."  
 WI, a work in progress  
 The biggest positive for the West Indies have been the return to form of wicketkeeper-batter Nicholas Pooran who slammed three half-centuries on the trot to be the top-run getter of the series with 184 runs at an average of 61.33.  
 "I thought it was a good series. The guys put their hands up and gave a good account of themselves. We are a work in progress and will get some time to think about things," Pollard said.

# Desperate India aim to end losing streak in NZ tour

**PTI ■ QUEENSTOWN**

The series already out of its grasp, a desperate Indian women's cricket team will look to snap the losing streak and salvage some pride by sorting its bowling and fielding woes in the fourth ODI against New Zealand here on Tuesday.  
 India suffered a second successive three-wicket loss to hosts New Zealand in the third game to concede the five-ODI series.  
 It was yet another limited-overs series loss for the Indian team, following the defeats to South Africa at home and in England and Australia in the last 12 months.



ODIs, especially with Harmanpreet Kaur struggling to get runs in the middle.

In the ongoing rubber, if batting let the team down in the one-off T20I and the first ODI, it was the bowlers and fielders who failed to keep things under control in the last two matches as the New Zealand side successfully chased down big totals.  
 With the World Cup looming, Mithali Raj's team will have to iron out the flaws in the next two ODIs and the return of star opener Smriti Mandhana and pacer Meghna Singh will bolster the team as it looks to get some momentum ahead of the big-ticket event.  
 In the bowling department, veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami was the only bright spot in the 3rd ODI as she rocked the top-order with three wickets but she lacked support as New Zealand recovered from 171 for 6 to chase down 280 with five balls to spare.  
 With Meghna back, India will look to field a strong and settled pace attack in the remaining two ODIs after experimenting with Pooja Vastrakar, Simran Bahadur and Renuka Singh.  
 Among spinners, Deepti Sharma has shone bright with seven scalps, including a four-wicket haul in the second ODI, but the likes of Poonam Yadav and Rajeshwari Gayakwad will have to put up more consistent shows.  
 India's batting has looked good with Sabbhineni Meghana grabbing the opportunity with both hands, hitting 49 and 61 in the last two ODIs in Mandhana's absence. Shafali Verma also returned to form with a 57-ball 51 in the third game.  
 With Mandhana back, it will be interesting to see the combination that skipper Mithali fields in the next two

New Zealand, on the other hand, have been working like a well-oiled machine. The hosts are high on confidence after chasing two big scores but one area they would like to improve is bowling in the final two games.  
 Amelia Kerr (219) and Suzie Bates (127) have been their best batters with each hitting a hundred in the first two games.  
 If the two have provided solidity at the top order, Amy Satterthwaite has been impressive in the middle with 122 runs in the series so far.  
 In the third ODI, it was Lauren Down and Katey Martin who showed their prowess down the order, stitching a match-winning 76-run stand for the seventh wicket.  
 In bowling, Jess Kerr and regular skipper Sophie Devine have been their most successful bowlers with five and four wickets respectively but the hosts allowed the Indians to score big totals and they will have to pull their socks up in the next two games.  
 Squads:  
 India: Sabbhineni Meghana, Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Mithali Raj (captain), Harmanpreet Kaur, Richa Ghosh (wk), Deepti Sharma, Pooja Vastrakar, Simran Bahadur, Poonam Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Sneha Rana, Meghna Singh, Taniya Bhatia, Renuka Singh, Smriti Mandhana, Jhulan Goswami.

# Djoker starts his season in Dubai

**AP ■ DUBAI**

Novak Djokovic's season, derailed in January when he was deported from Australia, finally starts on Monday in Dubai with the world number one insisting players in the locker room "have been positive and welcoming" on his return.  
 Djokovic missed the chance to win a 10th Australian Open, and 21st Grand Slam, due to the cancellation of his visa in Melbourne and eventual deportation as a result of not being vaccinated.  
 He returns to the tour this week in the Emirates, where he will be competing for the first time since the Davis Cup Finals in Madrid last December.  
 Dubai organisers have dubbed the first day of the ATP event 'Magnificent Monday' and a couple of other marquee entrants, Marin Cilic and Andy Murray, will also be in action.



But all eyes will be on Djokovic who last played in Serbia's Davis Cup semi-final defeat by Croatia.  
 Djokovic, who saw Rafael Nadal win in Australia to claim a 21st major, is able to play in Dubai as a coronavirus vaccine is not a requirement to enter the United Arab Emirates.  
 The Serbian is a five-time

# R Praggnanandhaa stuns World No 1 Magnus Carlsen

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa stunned world No 1 Magnus Carlsen in the eighth round of the Airthings Masters, an online rapid chess tournament.  
 Praggnanandhaa won with black pieces in 39 moves in a Tarrasch variation game early on Monday to halt Carlsen's run of three straight wins.  
 The Indian GM lies in joint 12th spot after eight rounds with eight points. His spectacular win over Carlsen comes after a moderate run in the earlier rounds, which included a solitary victory over Lev Aronian, two draws and four defeats.  
 He drew against Anish Giri and Quang Liem Le and lost to Eric Hansen, Ding Liren, Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov.  
 Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi, who lost the world championship match a few months ago to the Norwegian world No 1 Carlsen, is on top of the standings with 19 points followed by Ding Liren and Hansen



(both on 15 points).  
 In the Airthings Masters, a 16-player online rapid tournament, a player gets three points for a win and one for a draw in the preliminary rounds. Seven more rounds remain in the preliminary phase.

# Lille boss wants team to be 'party poopers' against Chelsea

**AP ■ LILLE**

Lille side sitting in mid-table in Ligue 1 head to London to face Chelsea this week hoping to play the role of "party poopers" against the reigning European champions, their coach Jocelyn Gourvennec said.  
 Recent Club World Cup winners Chelsea are heavy favourites to beat Lille in their Champions League last-16 tie as Thomas Tuchel's side look to retain the title they won by beating Manchester City in last season's final.  
 Lille already exceeded expectations just by reaching the last 16 of Europe's elite club competition for the first time since 2006/07 and, as they make the short trip to the other side of the English Channel for the first leg, their aim is to keep the tie alive for the return. "We are competitors so we will not be going there just to be Chelsea's sparring partners, that's for sure," Gourvennec said.  
 "They are a great team but

there are always surprises in cup matches and we want to be the party poopers, as we have been since the beginning of this Champions League campaign."  
 The side from France's far north caused a major upset by winning the French title last season ahead of star-studded Paris Saint-Germain and they then topped their Champions League section above Austrian champions Salzburg, Sevilla and Wolfsburg.  
 However, they find themselves in 11th place in the French top flight two-thirds of the way through this season, nine points adrift of the podium with only the top three qualifying for the Champions League.  
**Juve' struggles continue despite new blood**  
 Juventus made a splash in the January transfer window when they snatched hot prospect Dusan Vlahovic and Switzerland midfielder Denis Zakaria, but their arrival has yet to provide the hoped-for boost ahead of



Tuesday's Champions League visit to Villarreal.  
 Massimiliano Allegri's side travel to Spain as the only Italian side with a realistic hope of mak-

ing the last eight after Inter Milan were beaten 2-0 at the San Siro by Liverpool on Wednesday.  
 However they go into the first leg of their last 16 tie in unsure

form, with results and above all performances that have left fans unsatisfied with Allegri's first season back in black and white.  
 Vlahovic arrived at Juve to great fanfare after joining from Fiorentina for an initial fee of 70 million euros (\$80.2 million), with Zakaria arriving three days later on deadline day.  
 Thrown straight in at the head of the Juve attack, with Alvaro Morata accommodating by shifting to a wide position, Serbia striker Vlahovic got off to a blistering start to life in Turin with a goal just 12 minutes into his debut against Verona.  
 But in the three matches since has shown some growing pains.  
 He struggled to make a mark at Atalanta last weekend, when Danilo saved Juve from what would have been a damaging defeat with a stoppage time header, and was kept almost anonymously by the impressive Bremer in his new team's 1-1 derby draw with Torino on Friday.

## Puri to direct international project

**D**irector Puri Jagannadh, who is gearing up for his next biggie *Liger*, will apparently direct an international project soon.

As per the *Pokiri* director, he will soon commence work for his dream movie *Jana Gana Mana*, and then, will take up an international project, about which he has kept information under the wraps.

Although details of this project aren't disclosed, for now, it is

reported that the international project will also be made under Puri Jagannadh's own banner — Puri Connects.

Puri Jagannadh will produce all these movies, in association with Charmme Kaur. The *Badri* director, who has completed script work on

these two projects will be spending his time on these biggies.

Puri Jagannadh's next directorial, Vijay Deverakonda-starrer *Liger* is gearing up for its release soon. The director wrapped up the shoot of the much-awaited project, which is billed as an action drama and will release on August 25.



**Nikhil takes live weapon training for his next**

**Y**oung and promising hero Nikhil Siddhartha's 19th film, being directed by Pacy editor Garry BH of *Goodachari*, *Evaru* and *HIT* fame and produced by K Raja Shekhar Reddy on Ed entertainments with Charan Tej Uppalapati as CEO will have its next shooting schedule begins from next month in Manali.

As the team will be filming some high-octane action sequences in the schedule, Nikhil is getting trained to perform some breath-taking stunts. Nikhil is taking live weapon

training and he shared a picture to reveal the same. "Live Weapons Training... For one Adrenaline Pumping Project with @Garrybh88 @Ishmenon @tej\_uppalapati @EdEntertainments," posted Nikhil on his Twitter page.

Iswarya Menon is playing the leading lady opposite Nikhil in this yet to be titled flick billed to be a complete action-packed spy thriller being made on a large scale. The film's first shooting schedule took place in Hyderabad.

This high budget entertainer will have association of some

prominent technical crew. Director Garry BH also takes care of editing, while Julian Amaru Estrada is the cinematographer. Srisharan Pakala renders soundtracks for the film.

Anirudh Krishnamurthy is the writer. Arjun Surisetty handles art department, while Ravi Anthony is the production designer where as Charantej uppalapati is handling the entire production as CEO of banner Ed entertainments which is bankrolling the project. Along with this project Ed entertainments is planning to do two more projects this year.

**Raahu actress set to make B'wood debut**

movie. I'm playing the role of Zufash. My character is really interesting and challenging. It has different shades and is a kind of dream role for me.

Earlier I shot for a Hindi movie, which could not release for its own reason. But as they call it destiny. I'm lucky to finally make my Bollywood debut."

The film also stars popular actors like Mushtaq Kak, Amit Antil, and Vikas Shukla, among others and is produced by Yahya Ibrahim.

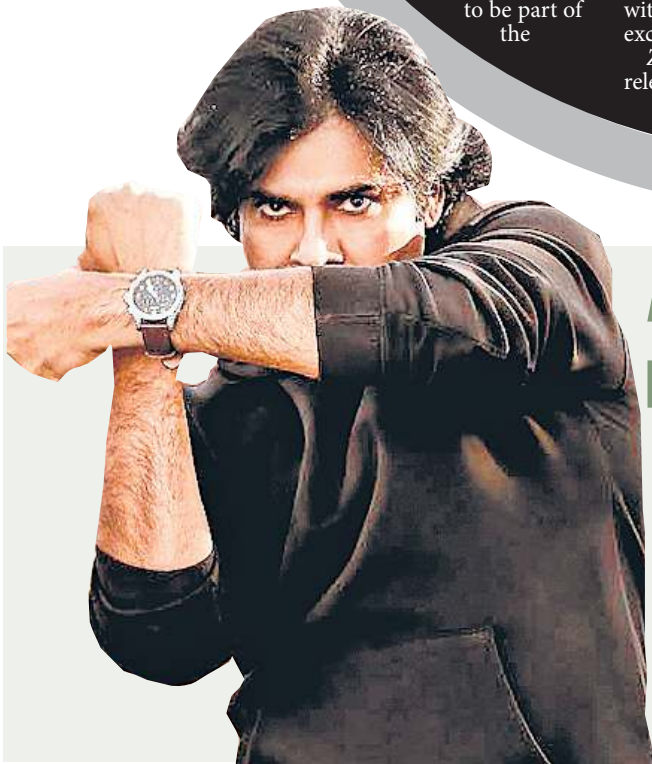
Ibrahim who is also making his debut in filmmaking says, "For me it was for the first time to experience shoots and the process of making a film. It was unplanned decision to unite with the team. When Naseem bhai (director) came to me with the story idea, it really excited me."

*Zufash* is scheduled to release later this year.

**A**ctress Kriti Garg known for featuring in Tollywood movies like *Bhanu*, *2 Hours Love* and *Raahu*, is excited to make her Bollywood debut opposite actor Ravi Bhatia.

The actress will essay the titular role in upcoming movie *Zufash*, directed by Naseem Khan and Sakib Shaikh.

She says, "I'm really delighted to be part of the



## Bheemla Nayak pre-release deferred because of AP minister's sudden death

**A**s a mark of respect following the sudden demise of Andhra Pradesh Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, the makers of Pawan Kalyan-starrer *Bheemla Nayak* have postponed the pre-release event which was set for Monday.

"Our deepest condolences to the family &

friends of AP Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy Garu on his sudden demise. As a mark of respect, the pre-release event of #BheemlaNayak won't be happening today!" Sithara Entertainments wrote on Twitter.

AP IT minister, Mekapati Gautam Reddy

passed away due to a massive cardiac arrest earlier on Monday in Hyderabad.

The trailer was supposed to be out at 8.10 PM, during the pre-release event. But, the postponement of the pre-release event has disappointed Pawan's fans who still have no clarity on the release of the theatrical trailer of the movie.

## Director Vignesh Shivan pens post on directing MS Dhoni for a CSK video

**D**irector Vignesh Shivan has shared a heartfelt note on the experience of directing Captain Cool MS Dhoni for a small video for Chennai Super Kings.

"Taking to Instagram, the director, who is a big fan of the cricketer, wrote a detailed post that was titled 'My favourite Story of myself!' The post read: "So many years back, my mom used to be in-charge of the security for the IPL cricket players. She being an Inspector of police, she had access to all places. I've seen her talk in Tamil to Dwayne Bravo once! Lol. I used to ask her and somehow, stand in one corner of Park Sheraton hotel to get a glimpse of my Idol — MSD! I've followed him all my life. Always been an ardent fan and a far away student!"

"There are times when I have handled situations during shooting, during failures, during success or many other situations. I would just imagine how MSD would react

to such a situation and I would do the same while working with a team of 100 members everyday! You need leadership skills and I've always followed my Idol!"

"Coming back to the mom story I used to stand for long hours and when he walks and gets into the house, I've always wished why can't the bus be parked somewhere longer!"

"One day, my mom had a chance to get a pic with MS Dhoni but I wasn't able to!!! Even she couldn't help me get one even though she had access! So it's always been a dream for me to meet him. Take a picture at least once in my lifetime! Then comes life, the work we do. And the blessings and prayers of our loved ones! Through an angel, certain good things happened & eventually whatever I manifested was happening behind me only to get me an opportunity to direct a small video for CSK with my icon!"



## Samantha's first look from Shakuntalam shows her as an enchantress

**S**amantha Ruth Prabhu's first look poster from her upcoming mythology-based love saga is out now. Dressed in white, fairy-like attire, Samantha's first look from *Shakuntalam* is no lesser than a beautiful painting.

Unveiling the poster, Samantha wrote, "Presenting.. Nature's beloved.. The ethereal and Demure.. 'Shakuntala' from #Shaakuntalam." What shows her as an enchantress, has Samantha sitting on a rock, as she is surrounded by peacocks, deers, swans, and butter-

flies. The first look caters to one of Samantha's best looks,

giving a glimpse at the type of role she will play in the film.

Based on a popular Indian play *Shakuntala* by Kalidasa, the film is written and directed by Gunasekhar. Malayalam actor Dev Mohan will reprise King Dushyant, while Allu Arjun's daughter Allu Arha will play Prince Bharata.

Actor Kabir Duhan Singh will appear as King Asura, while other prominent actors will play important roles in the mythological movie.

Being it Samantha Ruth Prabhu's first pan-India movie, all hopes are pinned on this visually creative mythological drama. The filming of *Shaakuntalam* was completed a long time ago, and now the post-production work is underway.



**A**llu Arjun and Sukumar's recent superhit *Pushpa: The Rise* has bagged 'Film Of The Year' award at Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022 ceremony.

The official Instagram account of Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival announced the news by writing, "Congratulations to 'Pushpa: The Rise' for winning the award for Film Of The Year at Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022. Your hard work and perseverance have paid off. Team DPIFF wishes you good luck in your future endeavours.."

**Pushpa bags Film of the Year award**

Pushpa: The Rise stars Allu Arjun as Pushpa Raj also features Rashmika Mandanna in the lead role of Srivalli.

